FRANKLIN CENTER REVITALIZATION

FRANKLIN CENTER
E. CENTRAL ST. SKETCH
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FRANKLIN CENTER REVITALIZATION REPORT

May,1984

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Franklin Center Revitalization technical report was prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council for the town of Franklin. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council is the officially designated regional-planning agency for 101 cities and towns in the Boston metroppolitan area. The Council helps its member communities plan in the areas of land use, envirionmental quality, solid waste, hazardous materials, air quality, housing, economic development, and transportation.

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introduction

INTRODUCTION

Franklin is located in the southwestern corner of the Boston metropolitan area and is typical of a small New England community. It has maintained a traditional character and among those features which have survived are examples of period architecture, Dean Junior College, and a friendly, small town atmosphere. However, Franklin is beginning to feel pressure from modern day changes.

With the completion of Interstate Route 495, the terminus of the commuter rail line located in the heart of the downtown and the beginning of development expansion in the area, Franklin is changing.

The demands of modern transportation and marketing have been disruptive to the fabric of the community. The ability of towns like Franklin to adapt to the rapid growth and change will be a major determining factor in the quality of their future.

The town has made an effort to meet this challenge. A committee of townspeople, made up of merchants, officials, bankers, and citizens, has worked with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to develop a comprehensive program of town center improvements.

The Franklin Center Revitalization Committee has been active for just over a year now and much has been accomplished. The fundamental outlines of a committee endorsed plan are in place. By direct vote or by consensus the Committee has addressed a wide range of questions and embraced approaches to their solution.

The plan is designed around the market study - the physical changes envisioned in the center are in support of its character as a place to live and work and shop, not vice-versa. The market recommendations contain a number of special actions that will allow the center to function as a better, more organized unit and to permit it to serve its patrons and compete with other areas better. Without attention to this area (marketing and organization) it is unlikely that physical or other changes alone will make much long-term difference.

Physical changes to the center have been designed in support of these goals. Complaints about traffic and parking have been heeded and effective solutions proposed. Techniques of urban design and planning have been applied to help the center both look and function as a more vital place, responding to the character and values of the community it serves.

Implementation of this program will be a major undertaking and will constitute the core of the Committee's work for the future. There is no simple, "quick-fix" way to go about it - no magic wand of planning, no miracle grant from the Feds to do the job. It will only be accomplished through hard work and close cooperation between the private and public sectors in accomplishing the hundreds of individual actions that will make up the final shape of your center. Frustrations are likely to mount as approvals and agreements stretch out for years when it seems like they should happen at once. But there is no easy way. There is only agreeing on an approach and pursuing it with energy and in a cooperative spirit.

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MARKET RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific Franklin market goals and actions:

o Improve the retail mix:

1. Balance the number and types of retail establishments diminishing saturation, and broaden the range of goods and services offered.
2. Encourage the development of new business in those areas currently poorly represented in the downtown, for example:
   a. Food: complement the existing mix with the addition of a fish market, an expanded or additional bakery or fruit and vegetable market.
   b. Miscellaneous retail outlets in both the convenience (e.g. a florist, a bookstore, record store, tobacconist) and comparison (e.g. toy store, bicycle store, children's clothing) categories.
   c. A general merchandiser, if possible, even a small one.
3. Take advantage of the existing specialization in furniture and hardware, by further expanding Franklin's home furnishings market.

o Market more aggressively:

1. Strengthen the Business Association, with aggressive elected officers, a single administrative leader, a dues structure, a consistent set of achievable goals, and a realistic work program. If possible, hire a part-time promotional specialist or at least a part-time secretary.
2. Take advantage of the expertise available through the United Chamber of Commere to provide the needed leadership in helping the business association improve the downtown.
3. Actively sell Franklin's expanding market, with its increases in population and income. This new popultion is not loyal to downtown Franklin; its members must be attracted away from malls and held through improved merchandising techniques.
4. Take better advantage of existing untapped or undertapped markets:
   a. Dean Junior College: provide student discounts to go with special promotions; continue special charge acounts; organize "Dean Junior College Days" in the spring and fall. Use student interns to help you with the implementation of your ideas, and to do some of the work that's going to be required for revitalization.
   b. Commuters: offer discounts to commuters similar to those you offer students. People can show that they are commuters by showing their ticket stubs or T-Pass. Use your reorganized parking system and expanded hours to turn the commuters into customers who enjoy shopping in your town. Advertise at the train station.

o Improve and expand the retail environment:

1. Simplicity and Quality: visual marketing -- as in store windows, advertisements, or in-store displays -- is often more effective if it tastefully spotlights only a few items. Share interesting store window props.
2. Business Hours: expand hours, and stay open two or three evenings a week until 8:00 or 9:00 (remember a lot of women who used to shop in downtowns during the day are now working 9-5). Perhaps on weekdays you can open at 10:00 in the morning instead of 9:00. Whatever hours you do choose, make sure that the downtown stores have coordinated hours, to take advantage of the maximum exposure to the maximum number of potential customers.

3. Cooperative Action: participate with other merchants in joint advertising and promotions (for example, a summertime sidewalk cafe, a farmers' market, a snowman contest in unused parking area, a community bulletin board, business-person luncheons, in coordinated window displays, in the development of mailing lists, in clean-up campaigns, and in community events.

o Improve the disorganized state of parking in the downtown area, and solve the problem of pedestrian safety within the downtown triangle, by taking action on the recommendations cited in other parts of this document.

o Undertake the recommended improvmeents (also cited elsewhere in this document) that will improve the environment of downtown Franklin.

TRAFFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

General Features:

o Reinstitute general two-way circulation throughout the downtown.

o Relocate State Route 140, both directions onto improved and upgraded West Central Street.

o Signalize all major intersections.

o Redevelop Main Street to better support pedestrian and shopper activity.

Specific Actions:

o Redevelop West Central Street as major east-west through route:

1. Widen roadway to 36'.
2. Two-way operation along entire length.
3. New 5' sidewalk, south side.
4. Place all utilities underground, remove utility poles.
5. Replace existing street lighting and utility poles.
6. Reduce total number of curb cuts in conformance with urban design redevelopment plan.
7. Upgrade curb entire length to 6" reveal granite.
8. Provide pull-off at medical offices.
9. No parking, both sides.
10. Relocate both directions of State Route 140 onto this segment.

o Signalize Emmons Street, West and West Central; interconnect with Central Street through traffic system.

o Downgrade Emmons Street demand by removing it as a leg of west-bound Route 140:

1. Revert to two-way operation.
2. Retain present width.
3. No parking, both sides.

o Improve intersection of Emmons and Main:

1. Reradius N.W. corner to 30'.
2. Relocate sidewalk behind granite pillar and redevelop in conformance with urban design proposal.
3. Provide neck-downs, both sides of Main for pedestrian safety and restriction of through traffic.
4. Sign for through traffic on Emmons Street.
5. Signalize.

o Redevelop Main Street from Emmons and Depot Street as major shopper and pedestrian precinct with additional parking and amenities, two-way access to municipal and depot parking via Clark Square:

1. Restore full two-way operation.
2. Provide neck-downs at several locations as shown to provide for pedestrian safety and amenities.
3. Widen sidewalk at Dean Bank block and eliminate parking.
4. Provide pedestrian island at Dean Bank block for safety and vehicular separation, rebuild Depot Street entrance to make more perpendicular with Main.
5. Improve and upgrade sidewalks in conformance with urban design proposals.
6. Incorporate one block of head-in conformance at the Emmons Street end of Main Street.

o Upgrade Clark Square intersection to provide full two-way operation:

1. Channelize flow with traffic island.
2. Signalize and interconnect with east-west through route system.
3. Reradius "nose" of central block to provide for better flow and more pedestrian area.
4. Develop island at Clark Sq. intersection with landscaping and watering trough to remain.

5. Resurface bridge.
6. Widen roadway to edge of existing bridge.
7. Relocate pedestrian access to new, modular bridge mounted at existing extensions of bridge abutments(necessitates taking two properties at #2 East Central and #2 West Central.
8. No parking within general limits of intersection.
9. Redesignate Cottage Street as one-way southwest bound (away from East Central Street) for one block to improve operation on the Main Street, eastbound approach.

o Upgrade East Central Street from Cottage to Summer:

1. Establish consistent curb line on south side of street, narrowing total available width.
2. Continued parking, both sides.
3. Signalize Summer Street intersection and interconnect with east-west through route system.

PARKING & URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Build on the Town's existing character and resources to create a pleasant and functional shopping, working and living environment. Expand parking opportunities and accessibility and improve image as a pedestrian and shopper-oriented environment.

o Organize central parking area and other parking improvements:

1. Combine parking areas behind Cataldo Building removing fences and relocating fireplace shop to West Central Street. This parking area becomes the major lot for short-term parking.
2. Improve access to drive-thru teller.
3. Improve traffic circulation within central parking area.
4. Consolidate entrances into central parking area along West Central Street. Establish one main entrance to parking. Separate traffic going in and out with landscaped island at entrance.
5. Introduce street trees throughout the parking area to provide shade and buffer from residences along Emmons Street.

o Expand and improve commuter parking area:

1. Extend existing MBTA commuter parking lot, increasing parking by 75 spaces.
2. Improve connections between commuter train station and Main and Central Street commercial areas with additional landscaping and attractive handrails along the steps and walkway.
3. Provide advertising space along railway for downtown merchants to advertise and attract commuters into the shopping areas along Main and Central Streets.
4. Redesign plaza area adjacent to train station, include landscaping and sitting areas.

o Develop additional parking area:

1. Acquire Masonic Hall, developing the site for 51 parking spaces.

o Improve existing parking area:

1. Increase lighting throughout the parking lot behind Cinema Block and place signs directing people to park in this lot.

o Improve Municipal Building:

1. Redesign parking layout to provide open space adjacent to Municipal Building
2. Landscape space around building to soften the building facade with plant materials similar to rest of town.
3. Provide lawn area and picnic tables.

o Create a safer more attractive Main Street:

1. Main Street from Central Street to Depot Street remains traffic route and access to commuter train station.
2. Main Street between Depot and Emmons Street becomes pedestrian-oriented and short-term parking.
3. Widen sidewalks along Main Street to 10' minimum to accommodate for tree grates and street trees and planters.
4. Line Main Street with hardy street trees and planting materials. Maximum spacing between street trees should be 40'.
5. Provide Victorian style benches and street lights along Main Street.
6. A landscaped island north of Depot Street becomes transition between vehicles and pedestrians.

7. Provide pedestrian crosswalks at corner of Emmons and Main, north of Depot Street and Main and at the intersection of Central and Main Street.
8. Upgrade rear entrances of buildings along Main Street for access from central parking lot.
9. Develop area behind Metcalf Building as pedestrian mall with landscaping, benches, plaza/actvity area, outdoor cafes, etc. as an optional plan.
10. Close off alley between Metcalf Building and Cataldo Building creating a pedestrian linkage between Main Street and central parking. Introduce landscaping and benches and provide lighting for safety.
11. Develop roadway between Valle's Jewelry and Ben Franklin Bank as pedestrian way to central parking.
12. Develop entry spaces at intersection of Main Street and Emmons Street with planting and banners flanking either side of Main Street, drawing people from Dean Junior College into activity along Main Street.

o Improve and upgrade West Central Street:

1. Expand retail development along north side of West Central Street.
2. Expand food and grocery establishments connected to White Hen Pantry, Shaw's Meats and Friendlies creating a market place complex with outdoor eating places, landscaping and improved parking.
3. Provide safe pull-in and drop-off area for Doctor's offices along West Central Street.

o Revitalize and restore Victorian theme:

1. Retain and expand upon Victorian style of architecture throughout downtown Franklin.
2. Franklin Furniture building needs minor repairs and improvements including: painting, new awnings, remove shades in second floor windows and improve and upgrade displays in storefront windows; all repairs to exterior should be done without disturbing the architectural style.
3. Cataldo Building - Also needs minor repairs and improvements to exterior including: painting, clean and paint detailed woodwork at doorways and cornice; upgrade store window displays and store entrances, coordinate signage.
4. Metcalf Building - Demolish diner structure along side of building, repair cornice, coordinate signage and storefront display area.
5. Depot Plaza - Redesign entire facade including: enlarge entrance to building making it easier to locate, and place colored banners on either side of the main entrance. Include a directory adjacent to the entrance, listing stores within the mall. Increase window space to make each shop's display more visible. Awnings over the windows would give a pleasant scale to the building. These exterior changes along with re-organization of the interior space will provide a much more attractive and marketable space.

6. New development along West Central Street should strongly relate to existing architecture in scale, materials, color, etc.
7. Attention should be given to the design of individual signs in Franklin and coordination of signs throughout town. Well design, maintained signs would greatly improve the look of the center. Consideration should be given to number, size and plaement of each sign. Sign-design guidelines for the zoning bylaws have been reviewed and are included in the zoning section of this report. Non-conforming signs should be given a deadline for changing.

o Enhance Victorian theme with street furnishings:

1. Introduce Victorian style street furniture throughout the downtown area, specifically along Main Street and Central Street tieing these two areas of town togethe, providing a sense of unity in the downtown.
2. The street furniture should allow the same design them as the architecture. Victorian style street lights and benches are widely available.
3. Widen sidewalks in some areas of Main Street and East Central Street to 10' minimum where possible, for comfort and ease in walking and to accommodate street trees and benches.

market analysis

MARKET ANALYSIS

Introduction

A center revitalization project is usually undertaken to help rejuvenate commercial activity in a downtown. To identify commercial problems and weaknesses, it is essential that some type of economic analysis be done. A market analysis is an examination of socio-economic factors, such as population, income and sales, which define the market conditions of an area. While it is only one element of the revitalization process, a market analysis is important as it identifies and measures opportunties for growth in economic terms.

Because the purpose of a market analysis is to describe economic conditions, it is important that it be done at the beginning of a project. Identifying market constraints and opportunties early on is critical to the development of realistic solutions to all kinds of downtown problems, not just economic ones. Because it describes the level of business activity in a downtown, a market analysis can be used to make other decisions about land use, parking, traffic, and design.

Analyzing the market conditions of an area is a two-part process. Part one focuses on local market factors such as demographics, trade-area definition, competing commercial areas, retail mix, and information on local businesses and shopper behavior. The second part is a more technical evaluation of these characteristics and examines trade-area expenditures and market opportunities.

FRANKLIN TRADE AREA

Central to understanding the economic conditions and potential of any commercial area is an understanding of its "trade area". This is the area from which merchants in general draw 80-85% of their business, and an assessment of this area is essential in any market analysis.

Identifying trade area boundaries requires thorough assessment of both geographic accessibility and the types of goods and services provided within a downtown. Factors such as population density, closeness to other commercial centers, and transportation access influence the definition of a market area. Other elements like retail mix, storefront design, traffic flow, and parking supply, determine the commercial strength of a downtown and its ability to attract patrons from that area.

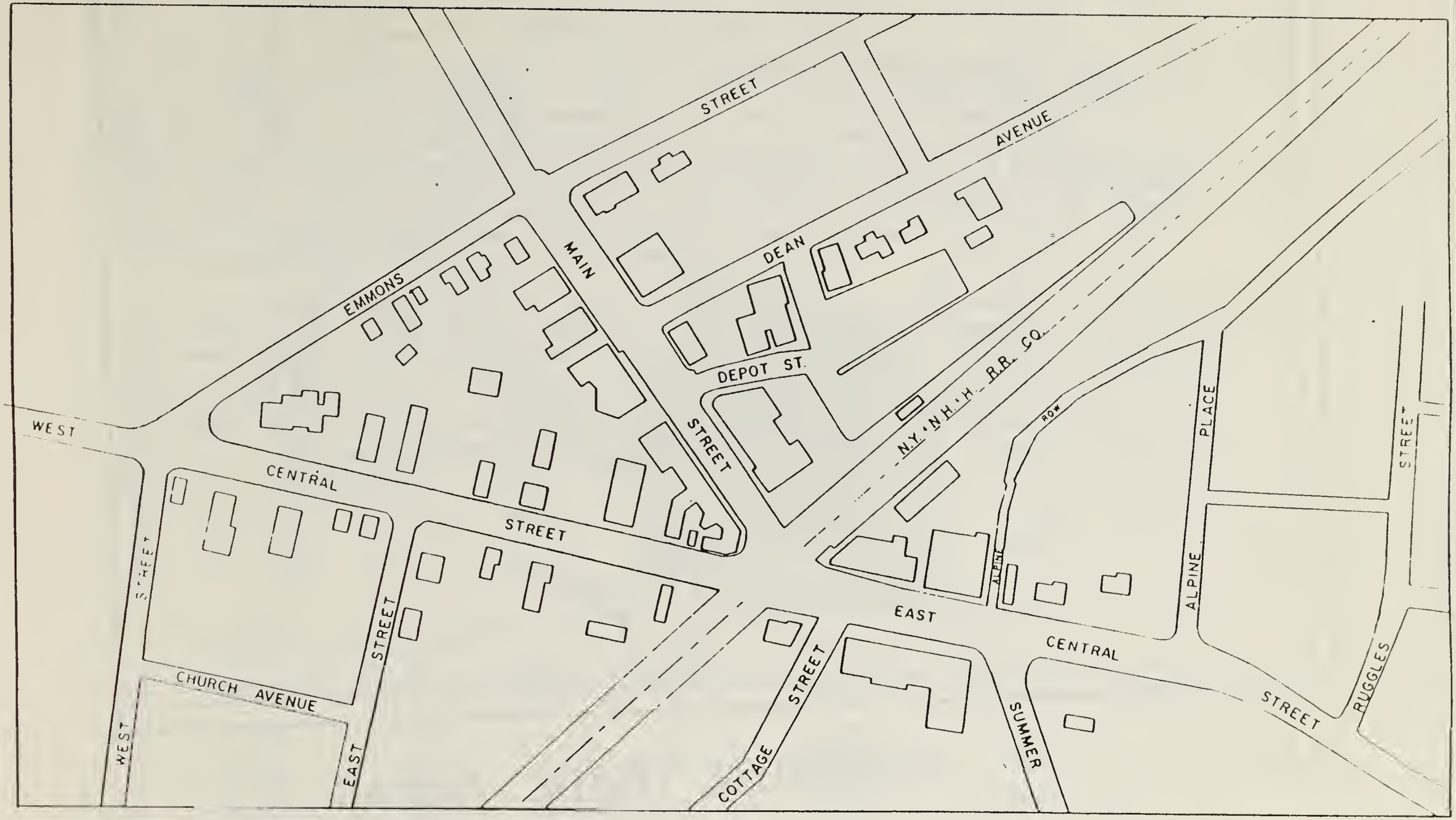
Map 1 shows downtown Franklin. For this analysis, "downtown Franklin" is defined as those portions of Main Street and West Central Street bounded on the northwest by Emmons Street; and proceeding from West Central onto East Central Street as far as Ruggles Street. Also included are all adjacent commercial sections of streets that intersect these portions of Main, West Central, and East Central.

As illustrated in Map 2, two trade areas have been defined for downtown Franklin: convenience and comparison. Convenience goods, such as food and drugs, tend to be purchased in easily accessible stores and to draw shoppers from the immediate market area. Downtown Franklin's convenience trade area consists of only the town of Franklin. The purchase of comparison items however, such as furniture or apparel, is based more on analysis of merchandise price and quality. Shoppers are willing to travel to find the best buy, so comparison items draw from a larger market area. Downtown Franklin's comparison trade area is comprised of Franklin and the adjacent communities of Bellingham, Medway, Millis, Norfolk, and Wrentham.

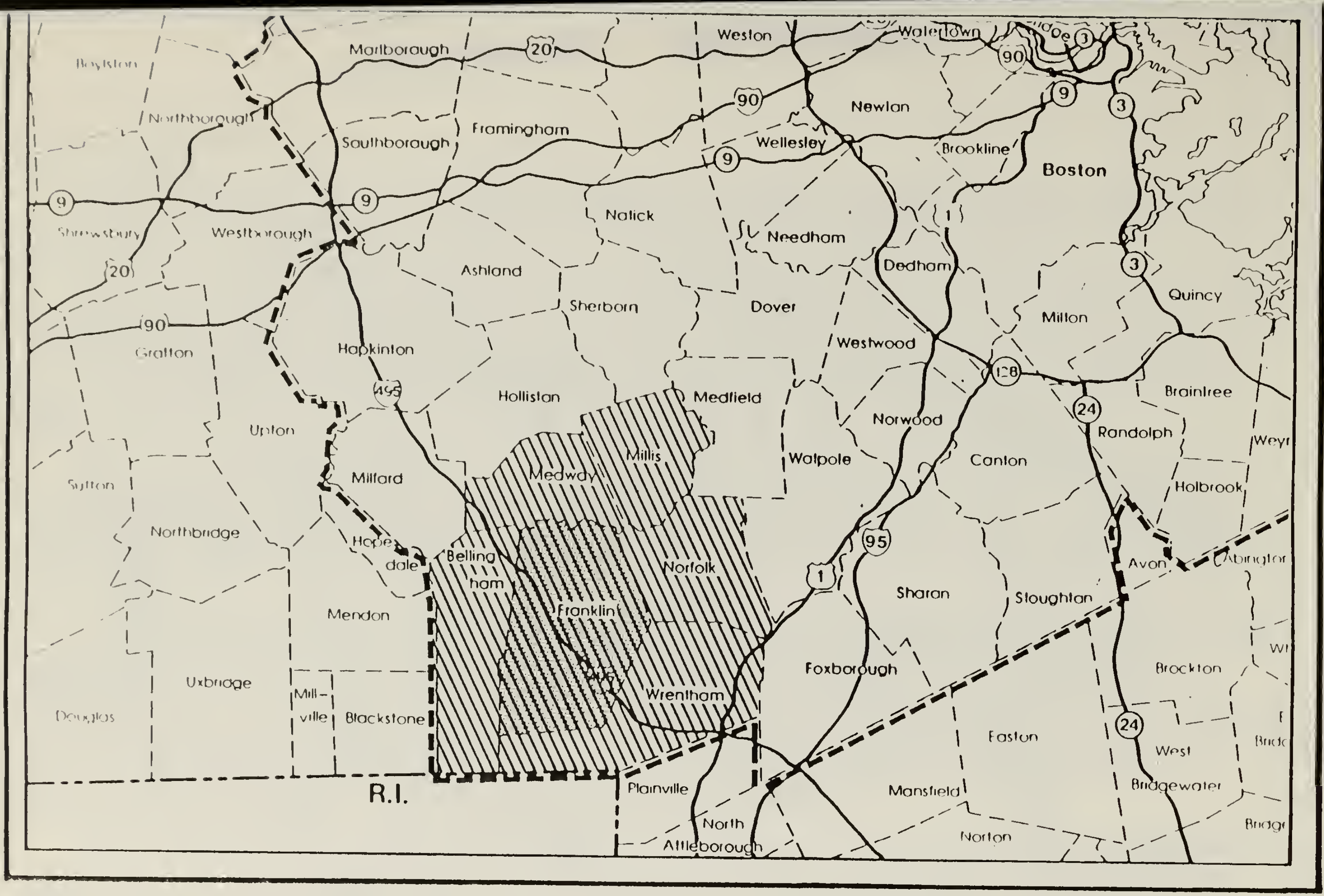
Like most older town centers in the Boston area, downtown Franklin is most commercially effective as a service and convenience-goods center. Business and shopper surveys indicate that convenience merchandise and services create the greatest customer draw, with over 50 percent of shoppers listing banking, 39 percent the post office, and over 30 percent buying newspapers/magazines or personal services as their primary activity downtown. Regional malls and shopping centers are considerable competition to local centers and have caused comparison sales to decrease in most older downtowns. This trend is reflected in MAPC survey results which show that a smaller amount of comparison shopping takes place in downtown Franklin, and that most patrons are residents.

Population and income statistics are fundamental to any examination of trade-area characteristics. These statistics define a market's limitations and indicate an area's economic strength.

MAP I DOWNTOWN FRANKLIN



FRANKLIN CENTER REVITALIZATION PROJECT



MAP 2

FRANKLIN TRADE AREAS

Convenience

Comparison

MAPC boundary

As can be seen in Table 1, Franklin's trade areas have experienced growth in both population and per capital income levels since 1970, with a continuation projected through 1987. Convenience trade area figures indicate population and income changes for Franklin, while the comparison trade area information reflects growth in the surrounding communities also. Although Franklin's population growth during the 1970-1982 period was approximtely half that of the comparison trade area, this difference is projected to diminish between 1982 and 1987. During the earlier period, the comparison trade area population grew 12.4% as compared to Franklin's growth of 6%. Through 1987 however, the comparison area is expected to gain 10.9% while Franklin is expected to increase 9.5%.

Like many older communities in the Boston area that developed as an industrial community, Franklin experienced a shift in its economic base during the 1960's and 1970's. The effect of the changing economy, which shifted away from traditional manufacturing and construction industries, served to slow Franklin's population growth and economic expansion, in relation to its surrounding communities. In fact, Franklin is fortunate to have maintained its per capita income levels despite rapid growth in surrounding communities. Between 1970 and 1982 Franklin's per capita income level grew by 30% while the comparison trade area level grew 33%. For the 1982-1987 period the difference will be even smaller as Franklin grows 9.5% and the larger area 10.3%

TABLE 1

POPULATION AND INCOME

	Convenience Trade Area[1]		Comparison Trade Area[2]	
Year	Population	Per Capita Income	Population	Per Capita Income[3]
1970	17,830	6,878	56,511	6,947
1980	18,217	8,574	60,934	8,851
1982	18,900	8,914	63,500	9,232
1987	20,700	9,764	70,400	10,185

1. Convenience Trade Area is the town of Franklin only.
2. Comparison Trade Area includes Franklin, Bellingham, Medway, Millis, Norfolk, and Wrentham.
3. All figures are adjusted to constant 1982 dollars.

SOURCES: Regional Decline or Revival, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, May 1982.
Summary of Social and Economic Characteristics: 1980, U.S. Bureau of Census, June 1982.

Retail Trends

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, which tracks business trends by community[1], retail sales in Franklin between 1972 and 1977 were up 14% or nearly $9.2 million[2]. The number of establishments also increased slightly, up 4.4%. An MAPC field survey of establishments completed in 1982 found the number of establishments in Franklin has increased between 1977 and 1982 by 3.4 percent.

As is clear from the high percentage of vacancies and the turnover in downtown Franklin, this growth has not occurred in the town center. The gain in establishments has come from additional development in areas surrounding the downtown: both ends of Route 140, and at Franklin Crossing. While downtown Franklin is fortunate to have a broad mix of uses, several financial institutions, a Post Office, and a commuter rail station, the commercial district shows signs of economic distress.

These findings are in keeping with the broad, regional trend in retailing to locate in large, modern complexes offering easy access, plentiful parking, climate control (usually) and the advantage of coordinated merchandising. In order to compete more successfully within its trade areas, downtown Franklin will have to target its sales more effectively, attracting customers, stabilizing businesses, and reducing vacancies.

As will be discussed, competition in the comparison category within Franklin Center's trade area is substantially less than has been experienced in other communities. This probably helps to account for the comparative strength that Franklin has shown over the past decade or so in attracting the comparison dollar. However, this situation is not expected to continue indefinitely. The major shopping centers at Woonsocket and Milford can be expected to continue to enlarge their attraction and the major new development proposed for Route 140 and I-495 can be expected to draw a major portion of the shopping from downtown Franklin.

It must also be remembered that older downtowns often rely very heavily on "shopper loyalty" established over many years, frequently before the development of shopping malls. This effect was found to be quite strong in Franklin. Although substantial new revenue potential exists because of the attractiveness of the Franklin trade area to new populations, these new people will be arriving with no built-in loyalty to downtown Franklin. In fact, since they are most often the young and mobile, they will be arriving with a built-in bias toward shopping malls and the areas where they grew up. This could dramatically increase the competitive edge of the malls and newer areas over the next decade unless substantial actions are taken to attract and hold these new consumers. There are a number of strategies available to Franklin merchants for doing this and these will be discussed in subsequent sections of this report.

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[1] U.S. Census of Retail Trade, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. (1972 & 1977).

[2] Dollars adjusted for inflation.

COMPETING COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Downtown Franklin must compete with numerous other shopping areas, both within its trade areas and outside those areas, that draw to a certain extent on all or parts of the same area that it must capture. In general, there are three types of commercial districts that compete for a share of shoppers' expenditures.

1. Neighborhood centers provide for the sale of goods needed often--convenience items such as food, drugs, and personal services. These centers are generally small, serve only their immediate area and have as their principal tenant a supermarket or food store.

2. Community centers offer a much wider range of goods and services, including comparison items. These centers generally are the size of a community central business district and have as their principal tenant a variety or discount department store.

3. Regional centers provide an extensive variety of goods--a broad selection of general merchandise, apparel, and home furnishings, as well as services and convenience items. At least one or two major department stores are the principal tenants of these shopping centers, which typically draw customers from a large area of several communities.[1]

Downtown Franklin is a community shopping center oriented toward providing convenience goods. Although some comparison goods are also offered, downtown Franklin is facing increasingly stiff competition from the newer regional centers. The Walpole Mall, Milford Plaza, and the shopping centers in Woonsocket, R.I. are good examples. These centers usually are near housing, industrial development, or major traffic routes, and are able to capture significant portions of both convenience and comparison trade area sales.

Very large regional malls, such as those in Framingham/Natick, draw a substantial portion of comparison shoppers from downtown trade areas. The size of these malls enables them to offer a range of goods and services at various prices. The consumer has more choices than in a smaller downtown, and shoppers justify longer travel times because more purchases can be made in a single trip.

Even the most successful retail districts cannot expect to capture 100 percent of their trade area sales, because a significant number of shoppers will always shop elsewhere. As Table 2 and Map 3 illustrate, competing districts exist all around downtown Franklin serving to draw off potential shoppers. More than 65 percent of all shoppers surveyed indicate that they shop in Bellingham and elsewhere in Franklin for convenience goods not found in the downtown.

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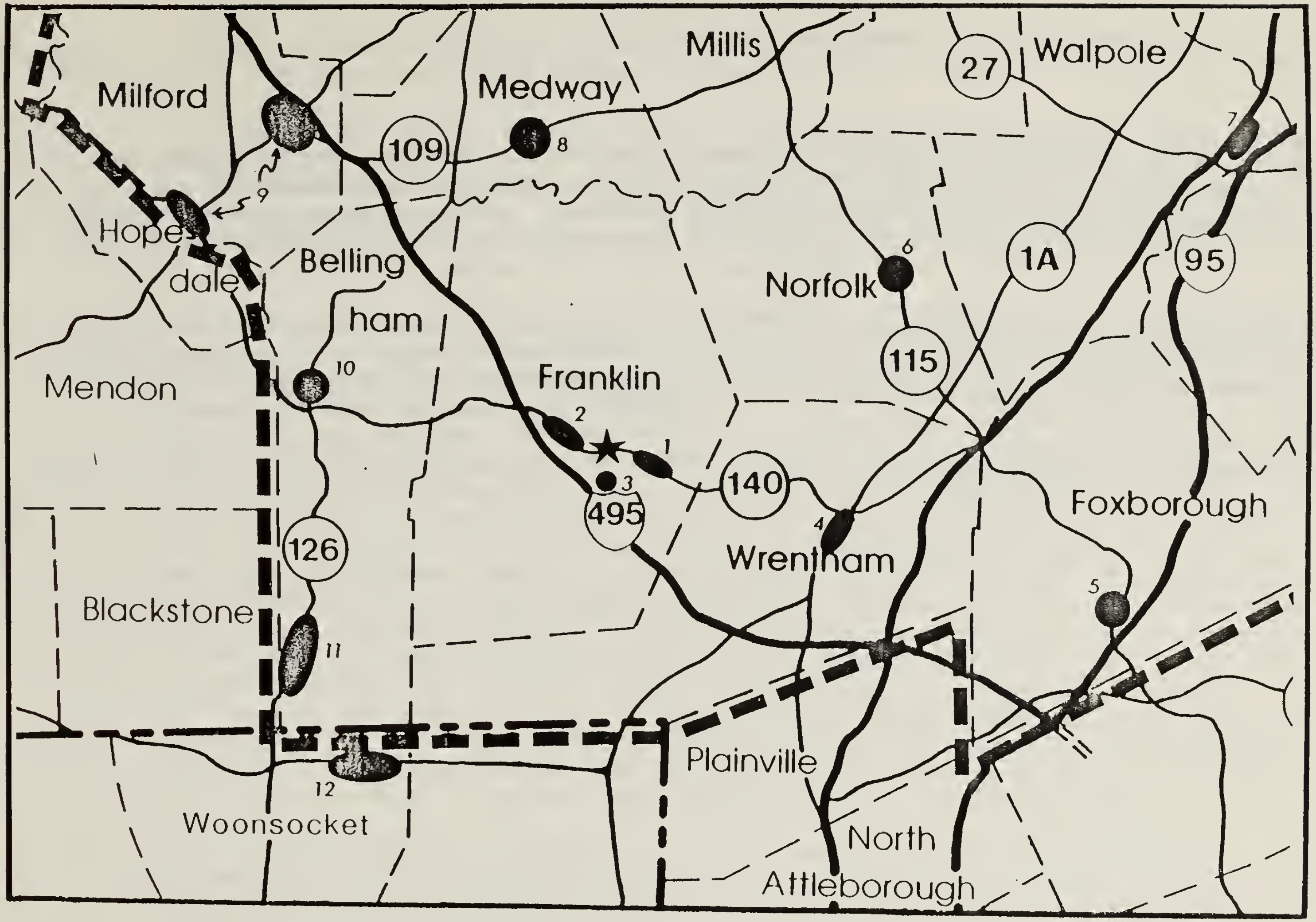
[1] Definitions from Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers, Urban Land Institute (1979).

TABLE 2

SELECTED DOWNTOWN FRANKLIN COMPETITION

Commercial District	Location	Sq. Ft.	Types of Competition	Area Served
Route 140 East	Franklin	18,750	Convenience/Comparison	Community
Route 140 West	Franklin	7,600	Convenience	Neighborhood/ Community
Franklin Crossing	Franklin	22,100	Convenience/Comparison	Neighborhood/ Community
Franklin Plaza	Franklin	12,000	Convenience	Community
Franklin Shoppers Fair	Franklin	105,000	Convenience	Community
Medway Shopping Center	Medway	75,000	Convenience	Community
Norfolk Center	Norfolk	30,000	Convenience	Community
Wrentham Center	Wrentham	15,000	Convenience	Community
King Phillip Plaza	Wrentham	8,000	Convenience	Community
Bellingham Plaza	Bellingham	15,000	Convenience	Community
Allouette Plaza	Bellingham	115,000	Convenience/Comparison	Community
Route 126 South	Bellingham	20,750	Convenience/Comparison	Community
Milford Shopping Centers	Milford	240,000	Convenience/Comparison	Community/Regional
Walpole Mall	Walpole	300,000	Convenience/Comparison	Community/Regional
Foxborough Shopping Center	Foxborough	100,000	Convenience/Comparison	Community
Woonsocket Shopping Centers	Woonsocket	490,000	Convenience/Comparison	Community/Regional

MAP 3 SELECTED COMPETITION



★ Downtown Franklin

1. Route 140 East & Franklin Shoppers Fair
2. Route 140 West & Franklin Plaza
3. Franklin Crossing
4. Wrentham Center & King Phillip Plaza
5. Foxborough Shopping Center
6. Norfolk Center
7. Walpole Mall
8. Medway Shopping Center
9. Milford Shopping Centers
10. Bellingham Plaza
11. Allouette Plaza & Route 126 South
12. Woonsocket Shopping Centers

Interestingly, competition for comparison goods within the trade area is not as strong as expected, with only 30 percent of shoppers reportedly going elsewhere within the trade area for goods not found in Franklin.

While growth in Franklin has generally occurred outside the downtown, and increasing amounts of competition have also developed in surrounding communities, more vigorous commercial activity in downtown Franklin would be generated by effective marketing. Such a strategy must include the targetting of sales especially to the convenience goods market and to growing population groups, as well as physical improvements to the downtown.

Convenience to local shoppers, particularly the elderly and college students, is an advantage to downtown Franklin. To capitalize on this asset, merchants must begin to offer a broader range of goods and services at a wider variety of prices. Coordinated advertising, special retail events, and coordinated night hours would also strengthen the downtown's ability to attract patrons. In addition, design improvements must be implemented. Shopper access to parking should be more convenient and attractive. Storefront renovation and maintenance would also help improve downtown Franklin's competitive stance.

RETAIL MIX

Retail mix, the number and type of businesses that make up a commercial district, is an important consideration when examining any trade area. Much of the success of the larger malls can be attributed to their offering a complementary mix of goods and services. Such a mix not only enables and encourages "one-stop shopping", but also attracts customers from a large trade area. Local commercial districts that contain a variety of goods and services also attract a more diverse, and thus larger, group of patrons from their trade areas.

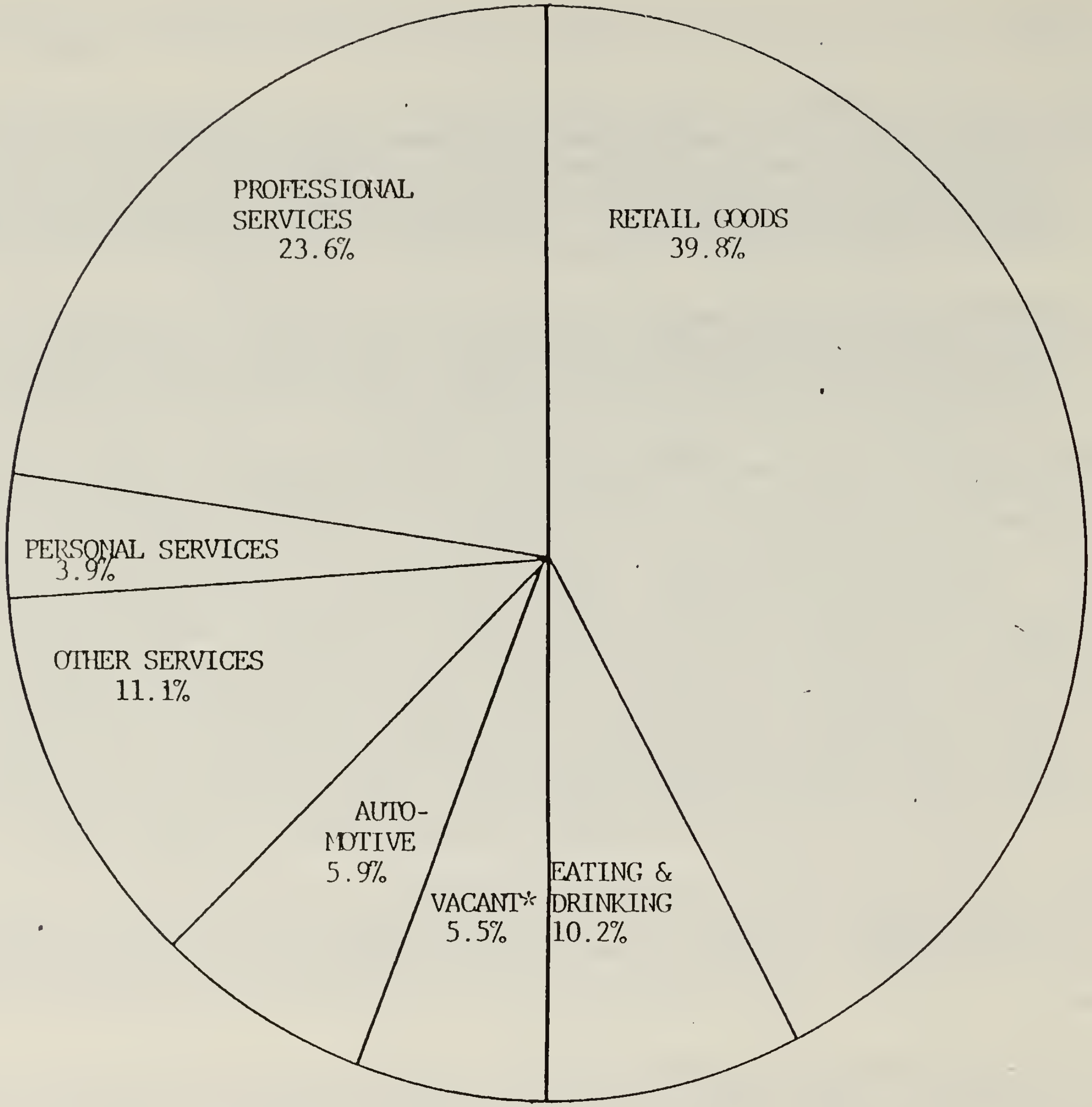
In Franklin, MAPC surveyed downtown businesses to establish a current inventory of commercial space. Chart 1 presents a breakdown of the nearly 200,000 square feet that was examined. Franklin has a balanced mix of goods (54.7 percent of space) and services (38.6 percent), but also suffers from a significant amount of vacant space (5.5 percent).

Table 3 presents a more detailed analysis of existing commercial space. Statistics in this table show that stores that carry comparison goods--including apparel, hardware and furniture occupy approximately 40 percent of the downtown's retail space. Convenience stores on the other hand occupy approximately 30 percent. This is not a typical situation for a downtown commercial district. An emphasis on convenience goods is typical of older town centers, and survey results indicate that these stores draw the largest number of shoppers. Shopper surveys conducted by MAPC indicate that 80 percent of downtown Franklin's customers shop downtown because it is convenient. The convenience orientation is further illustrated by survey responses indicating that 84 percent of those surveyed come downtown more than once a week, with 59 percent visiting the downtown daily. Survey results also indicate that only limited comparison shopping occurs; for example, 12.9 percent of those polled patronized shoe stores and 13.3 percent were shopping for hardware. Dollar amounts spent per trip to the downtown also indicated that a majority of customers engage in convenience shopping, as 69 percent of patrons reported that they spent $10.00 or less.

Downtown Franklin's retail stores are characterized by a balanced mix of retail goods and services. Several banks, the post office, and professional and personal services are positive and stabilizing influences. It should be noted however, that many of these establishments do not generate much additional commercial activity as they are the only destination of the customers who use them.

The primary problem facing downtown Franklin lies in the variety and quality of goods offered. Although a balance of retail stores in favor of comparison goods is unusual, it would not be a negative factor if the comparison trade sales were strong. However, there are weaknesses in both convenience and comparison categories in the downtown. In order to provide a better balance of retail goods, and to better serve as a convenience center for the majority of its customers, downtown Franklin should strive to increase the number of convenience oriented businesses.

CHART 1 DOWNTOWN FRANKLIN COMMERCIAL MIX



*VACANT SPACE INCLUDES ONLY FIRST-FLOOR RETAIL SPACE

TABLE 3

INVENTORY OF COMMERCIAL SPACE

COMMERCIAL CATEGORY	DOWNTOWN FRANKLIN SQ. FT	%
RETAIL TRADE		
Food/Liquor	8,500	4.3
Apparel and Accessories	10,500	5.3
Furniture and Appliances	30,000	15.3
Hardware	6,000	3.1
General Merchandise[1]	0	
Miscellaneous Retail[2]	23,300	11.8
SUBTOTAL	78,300	39.8
SERVICES		
Automotive	11,600	5.9
Eating and Drinking	20,100	10.2
Personal Services[3]	7,750	3.9
Professional Services[4]	46,400	23.6
Other Services[5]	21,800	11.1
SUBTOTAL	107,650	54.7
VACANT SPACE[6]	10,700	5.5
TOTAL	196,650	100

1. "General Merchandise" includes retail stores that sell a number of lines of merchandise such as dry goods, apparel, furniture, and hardwares. Department stores are included.
2. "Miscellaneous Retail" includes retail establishments not classified elsewhere, such as drugs, sporting goods, stationery stores, and jewelers.
3. "Personal Services" includes establishments engaged in providing services for persons or their apparel, such as beauty and barber shops, dry cleaning and laundries.
4. "Professional Services" includes establishments providing services to businesses or individuals on a fee or contact basis, such as doctors, lawyers, and finance and insurance brokers.
5. "Other Services" includes repair shops, social-service agencies, recreational facilities, and travel agencies.
6. This number includes only first-floor space in established retail buildings.

SOURCE: Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Boston, MA (1982).

Although the center has a significant amount of vacant space, much of this space is poorly located off of the main streets, or within buildings that are not clearly retail stores. In fact, many of the existing businesses in the downtown suffer from poor locations, physical appearance and design.

To reach a more competitive position, downtown merchants must strengthen the retail mix, diversify their goods and services, and attract additional customers through improved physical design and merchandising techniques.

BUSINESS SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The business survey of downtown Franklin was done to gather information on rents, floor space, peak activity periods, etc. Survey results identify the downtown's principal assets and problems from a businessperson's perspective. The survey was given to approximately 80 downtown businesses, including both retail and service establishments. Approximately 55% completed and returned the questionnaire.

Survey results indicate the general business climate in the downtown has been fairly stable. Approximately 50 percent of the respondents have been in operation for over 10 years, and 41 percent for over 20 years. Of those polled, 60 percent reported no plans to change either locations or their scope of services, although 15 percent reported plans for interior renovations. Sales were reported strongly positive with 68 percent reporting sales up by an average of 17 percent, 27 percent reporting sales constant, and only six percent reporting sales down by an average of seven and one-half percent.

It is important to note however, that 12.5 percent of those businesses polled expressed plans to move outside of downtown Franklin, and another seven and one half percent reported plans to change the goods or services offered. Survey results also indicate that downtown Franklin's businesses range in size from 180 to 50,000 square feet; sales ranged from $16,000 to $380,000 a year.

Businesspeople reported that the average customer is a woman between 20 and 50 years old. The surveys also report that 77 percent of the downtown shoppers live in Franklin, Wrentham, or Bellingham, with Franklin residents accounting for 65 percent. Other communities where customers reside include Medway, Norfolk, Millis and Milford. Over 80 percent of those shopping come to the downtown by car, according to businesspeople, and almost 14 percent walk. Peak shopping and business periods occurred on Friday, Saturday and Monday, with daily activity fairly constant between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Year-round, there were peak periods in fall and spring with a significant drop in the summer. Businesspeople also reported a range of from 1-60 percent of their customers are college students.

Those businesses polled reported that most competitors are located within Franklin and Milford, although surprisingly, many businesspeople specifically listed no competitors within the area. Over 60 percent listed parking and traffic as a problem, while another 15 percent felt the downtown lacked sufficient store variety. However, 31 percent felt that the overall improvements, renovations and appearance of the downtown were assets. Other positive features mentioned by respondents were the presence of banks/post office (26 percent), good store variety (13 percent) and the friendly shops (11 percent).

When asked for recommendations to improve the downtown, the majority of businesses (57 percent) listed parking and traffic improvements. Other suggestions included storefront renovations and street improvements (13 percent), more police present in the downtown, and more retail stores.

A summary of the business survey follows. Complete results are contained in the Appendix.

BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

Number of Years in Businesses

Less than 2 years	14%
2-5 years	25%
6-10 years	11%
11-20 years	9%
over 20 years	41%

Floor Space

Range	180-50,000 square feet
Average	1700
Median	1500

Own/Rent

Own	32%
Rent	68%

Annual Rent

Range	$2,700/-$26,400/yr.
Average	$6,000/yr.
Median	$6,600/yr.
Average rent per square feet	$3.50

Changes Being Considered

Expanding in downtown Franklin	2.5%
Moving out of downtown Franklin	12.5%
Changes in goods or services offered	7.5%
Storefront renovations	0%
Interior renovations	15.0%
Other	2.5%
No Changes	60.0%

Annual Sales

Range	$16,000-$380,000
Average	$166,000
Median	$175,000

Customer Residence

Franklin	65.3%
Wrentham	5.9%
Bellingham	5.6%
Medway	5.2%
Norfolk	5.1%
Millis	3.6%
Milford	4.8%
Other	4.5%

Major Problems

Parking	36%
Traffic	26%
Lack of Store Variety	15%
Appearance	13%
Shopping Center Competition	5%
Vandalism/Security	3%
Other	2%

Changes Desired

Parking	45%
Traffic	32%
Storefront renovations/ street improvements	13%
More retail stores	5%
More police	5%

Sales Trends

Up by an average of 17%/yrs.	67.6%
Constant	26.5%
Down by an average of 7.6%/yr.	6.9%

Busy Days

Monday	18%
Tuesday	9%
Wednesday	6%
Thursday	12%
Friday	29%
Saturday	26%
Sunday	0%

Positive Characteristics

Banks/Post Office	26%
Renovation/Improvements/Appearance	31%
Good Store Variety	13%
Friendly Shops	11%
Restaurants	5%
Train	5%
Theater	3%
Dean Jr. College	3%
One-way System	3%

SHOPPER-SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

To identify the key assets and problems of downtown Franklin, a survey was administered to over 230 shoppers within the project area. Surveys were conducted on a weekday during the fall of 1982. As a counterpart to the business survey, the shoppers' study identified the characteristics and suggestions of the people using the downtown. Patrons were asked specific questions about themselves, their use of the downtown, and their spending habits.

The results indicate that downtown Franklin,like most such downtowns is visited mostly by convenience shoppers. Almost 50 percent of the respondents came downtown to do their banking; other high-percentage activities included going to the post office and purchasing newspapers, cards/gifts and liquor. In fact, nearly 80 percent of the respondents said that convenience was the major reason they came to downtown Franklin. Approximately 10 percent responded that they were in the downtown because of services available, and just over nine percent said they were there for specific stores.

The results also showed that shoppers made frequent, short trips to the downtown. Nearly 85 percent reported coming downtown once a week or more, with just under 60 percent claiming daily trips. Almost three-quarters of those interviewed reported that their average shopping trip was under one hour, and 50 percent remained downtown for 30 minutes or less.

Despite the overwhelming convenience-oriented activity, some shoppers indicated that they also use the downtown for comparison shopping. More than 25 percent of those responding indicated they were downtown to shop for hardware items or shoes, and 25 percent also reported spending over $10 on an average trip.

Franklin residents make up the majority of downtown shoppers (over 85 percent),with more than 25 percent actually living in the downtown). The remaining shoppers live in the surrounding communities, with the largest number coming from Bellingham. Although 60 percent of those responding reported getting to the downtown by car, a significant number (37 percent) reported walking to the downtown. The largest age group was 20-35 years old (39 percent), and 59 percent of those responding were female.

Survey results also revealed that downtown Franklin's strongest competitors for convenience shopping are elsewhere in Franklin. Over 60 percent of those surveyed shopped elsewhere in Franklin for convenience items. (It is interesting to note that only 15% of the businesspeople surveyed listed stores elsewhere in Franklin as competitors.) Other competition for convenience goods is located in Milford (12.4 percent), and Bellingham and Woonsocket (5 percent each).

The results for comparison shopping show more diverse competitors. Respondents named locations elsewhere in Franklin and Milford as the two strongest competitors (27 percent and 24 percent respectively); other locations include Framingham/Natick (18 percent), Woonsocket (17 percent), Walpole and Bellingham. Of those shoppers with suggestions for new goods or services, more than 33 percent listed clothing stores as most desirable, while approximately 22 percent would like to have additional food stores and 13 percent a discount department store or general merchandise store. A fast-food restaurant, arcade or entertainment center, and camera, record and bookstores were also listed by respondents. These results indicate a desire by shoppers for additional convenience and comparison shopping opportunities.

Over 50 percent of those responding named parking as a problem downtown, with traffic (39 percent), lack of store variety (38 percent), and downtown appearance (19 percent) also mentioned. When asked for specific improvements 32 percent called for traffic improvements, 27 percent wanted improved parking, 16 percent felt there should be improvements in general appearance, and 16 percent also wanted better store variety. Five percent suggested improved pedestrian amenities. Overall, shoppers felt that the quality of the downtown had improved in the last three years as 52 percent reported conditions were better, 38 percent saw no changes, and 10 percent felt things were worse.

A summary of the shopper survey follows. Complete results are contained in the Appendix.

FRANKLIN SHOPPER SURVEY

Frequency of Trips to Downtown Franklin

Daily	59.3%
More than once a week	25.1%
About once a week	10.4%
About twice a month	1.7%
About once a month	1.8%
Less than once month	1.7%

Reason for Shopping Downtown

Convenience	79.9%
Stores	9.1%
Services	9.6%
Other	1.4%

Additional Goods or Services Desired

Food store	21.7%
Arcade/Lounge/Entertainment	3.6%
Fast food restaurant	10.8%
Better restaurant	8.5%
Clothing stores	33.7%
Camera/Records/Books	6.0%
Discount Dept. Store - 5c and 10c	13.3%
Pet store	1.2%
Hardware	1.2%

Amount Spent Per Trip

Under $5	37.7%
$5 - $10	36.7%
$11 - $25	15.8%
Over $25	9.8%

Length of Stay Downtown

Under 15 minutes	20.1%
15-30 minutes	30.6%
30 minutes - 1 hour	23.5%
1-2 hours	9.4%
Over 2 hours	16.4%

Residence of Shopper

Downtown Franklin	26.2%
Elsewhere in Franklin	59.4%
Bellingham	3.9%
Millis	.9%
Norfolk	.9%
Wrentham	.4%
Medway	1.3%
Other	7.0%

Where Else Shopped for Convenience Items

Elsewhere in Franklin	63.3%
Bellingham	5.0%
Millis	1.0%
Medway	2.3%
Woonsocket	5.0%
Milford	12.4%
Other	11.0%

Where Else Shopped for Comparison Items

Elsewhere in Franklin	26.6%
Bellingham	2.1%
Milford	23.6%
Woonsocket	17.2%
Framingham/Natick	17.6%
Walpole	7.3%
Other	5.6%

Desired Improvements

Traffic	32%
Parking	27%
Appearance	16%
Store Variety	16%
Pedestrian Amenities	5%
General Attitude	4%

CURRENT MARKET CONDITIONS

The success of a retail center depends on its ability to capture a share of the yearly expenditures made by a given trade-area population. So far in this analysis, discussions have centered on ways in which demographics, geography, and location affect a downtown's ability to attract customers, that is, to capture a certain market share. In this section, our discussion turns from these definitions of market capture to an economic examination of downtown Franklin's current market condition.

Through a comprehensive analysis of trade-area services in downtown Franklin, it becomes possible to define both qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the downtown's share of trade-area expenditures, including:

-- the types of goods and services purchased;
-- the number of dollars spent on those goods and services; and
-- the percentage of overall trade-area expenditures that these purchases represent.

Downtown sales as a percentage of trade-area expenditures mathematically defines the concept of market capture. In order to determine how well the downtown is currently taking advantage of existing market opportunities and to identify where the potentials for increased or decreased capture lie, trade-area expenditures captured by each retail category within the downtown must be carefully reviewed. For purposes of this analysis, goods and services have been categorized according to U.S. Census of Retail Trade business definitions. Downtown Franklin supports nine of these business types, including: Apparel/Accessories, Drugs, Hardware/Building Supplies, Furniture/Appliances, Eating/Drinking, Food, Liquor, Personal Services, and Miscellaneous Retail.

In this section, current market conditions in these categories will be examined (see Table 4). It is important to note that capture rates -- the percentage of trade-area dollars actually spent in downtown Franklin --have been calculated for either the convenience trade area or the comparison trade area[1], depending on the retail category being discussed. Food/Liquor, Personal Services, and Eating/Drinking are considered to be competing in the convenience trade area, i.e., within the Town of Franklin. Comparison trade area goods include Hardware/Building Supplies, Furniture/Appliances, Apparel/Accessories, and Miscellaneous Retail.

For the sake of confidentiality, the following analyses are confined to a discussion of aggregates, although the unique characteristics of individual businesses have been carefully considered.

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[1] See the definition of trade areas, on page __ of this report.

TABLE 4

1982 TRADE AREA EXPENDITURES

Commercial Category	Convenience T.A. Expenditures	Comparison T.A. Expenditures	Downtown Sales	Percent of T.A. Expenditures
Food/Liquor	$ 23,586,400	-	$1,114,000	4.7
Eating/Drinking	9,940,000	-	1,127,800	11.3
Personal Services	2,527,100	-	394,800	15.6
Apparel/Accessories	-	19,345,700	702,900	3.6
Furniture/Appliances	-	14,483,300	1,333,000	9.2
Miscellaneous Retail[1]	-	31,757,900	1,936,900	6.1
General Merchandise		45,139,900	0	0
TOTALS		146,780,300[2]	$6,608,700	4.5%

[1] "Miscellaneous Retail": includes Drugs, Hardware, and all goods not categorized elsewhere.

[2] Total = Convenience-Trade-Area Expenditures and Comparison-Trade-Area Expenditures.

SOURCE: Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Boston, MA (1982).

Food/Liquor

Of the more than $23 million available in convenience-trade-area food/liquor expenditures, downtown Franklin captures about $1,114,000 in sales, or less than 5 percent of the total. A capture of ten to fifteen percent is common in a downtown commercial district.[1] In this case, food and liquor have been combined to protect confidentiality and the result is that strong liquor sales actually inflate a poor food capture rate.

Food stores in downtown Franklin are comparatively small and there are very few of them. As a group, food retailers occupy less than 7,000 square feet -- a single supermarket in newer centers generally is more than twice this size. Though relatively small operations, retailers in this category are also characterized by high sales per square foot, and represent some of the downtown's sales leaders. It is the lack of additional establishments that results in a low capture, and when separated out downtown Franklin captures only 3.8 percent of available convenience-trade-area food expenditures. A range of 5 to 10 percent is common. Although the downtown has only one liquor store, its sales are well within the desirable range of 10 to 15 percent of the available convenience-trade-area liquor expenditures.

Given the size of the existing food retailers in downtown Franklin, and the competition from supermarkets outside the downtown, i'ts easy to see why the current capture of food sales is below average. It is also unlikely that a major supermarket will locate within the downtown. Growth in this category is more likely to occur through the addition of smaller stores offering a complementary mix of goods.

Eating and Drinking

Eating and Drinking places in Franklin capture a healthy 11 percent of convenience trade area dollars, with current sales totaling over $1.1 million. In an older downtown, a capture between five and ten percent generally is the range. Although Franklin is capturing sales exceeding the typical range, information about the types of establishments present indicate that the downtown's position in this category is not as strong as its capture indicates. Downtown Franklin's "eating" places consist mostly of doughnut and sandwich shops. Despite the number of establishments there is little difference in the quality, and most cater to the same market group. Consequently, sales in this group comprise a sizable market share or capture, but most establishments claim only average business. The presence of several bars in the downtown also serves to boost the overall sales level of this category.

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[1] The capture rates for comparable downtown shopping districts, referred to throughout this report, are derived from previous MAPC market analyses, and information provided by Minot, DeBlois, and Maddison, a real-estate-investment consulting firm.

The overabundance of either of these establishments, sandwich/doughnut shops or bars, has a negative influence on the market area. Saturation of any retail type not only limits growth within that category but also hinders the development of a successful mix of goods and services. Shopper-survey results highlighted this problem. Despite the existing eating places, of those responding, close to 20 percent of shoppers indicated they would like to see a better restaurant or a franchised fast food restaurant in the downtown. These results indicate a dissatisfaction with the current mix of eating places.

Eating and drinking establishments are a unique commercial activity within the context of a central business district. Unlike retail businesses, which benefit from their closeness to one another, restaurants are independent. While they can enjoy some of the spillover from other commercial activities, they generally do not create activity in return. A consumer is much more likely to stop for lunch, dinner or a drink incidental to shopping than s/he is to shop incidental to a dinner out. This helps explain the ability of restaurants to stand by themselves, outside of a major commercial district, while individual retail establishments are rarely capable of isolated survival. The success of an eating or drinking establishment is far less dependent on how that business complements existing activities in a downtown than it is on the quality and attractiveness of the services it provides. For these reasons, it is more difficult to define the potential for growth or decline in this category. Generally speaking, a new restaurant will succeed or fail based on its individual characteristics, not on the basis of what the market might indicate.

Given the current capture rate however, it is more likely that growth will occur through the expansion of some businesses and the replacement of marginal ones, than through additional establishments. Eating and drinking establishments that replace any existing ones will improve the overall downtown if they offer food and/or drink not currently available, thereby providing more variety and attracting new downtown shoppers.

<u>Personal Services</u>

Total sales for personal services in downtown Franklin are just under $400,000. This represents a strong 15.6 percent of the $2.5 million available in convenience-trade-area expenditures. A typical capture ranges from 10 to 15 percent in this category.

Businesses in this retail group are usually small, the average store size in Franklin is 650 square feet. Downtown Franklin's capture of 15.6 percent of personal service sales is in keeping with its functon as a convenience center. Most of these services, especially beauty and barber, are their own destination, so they are not as dependent on location as stores carrying retail goods. The result is that personal services have been able to take advantage of the lower rents found in older town centers and have congregated there, often in locations less desirable to typical retailers.

Although current capture is very high, the downtown is primarily a convenience center and so limited growth is possible through the expansion of stronger businesses and the replacement of marginal ones. This category is typically dominated by hair care, as it is in Franklin, but a fuller range of repair services, cleaners etc. would be beneficial to the downtown. As with Eating and Drinking establishments, saturation of any category by one type of business, hinders the development of a successful mix of goods and services. Replacement of weaker busineses will benefit the downtown most if new establishments provide services not already present or abundant in the downtown.

Apparel and Accessories

Apparel is one retail category in downtown Franklin that provides opportunities for the comparison shopper. As was indicated by the business and shopper surveys, the downtown's primary function is as a convenience center for goods and services. The presence of a few clothing retailers shows that in addition to its main function, the downtown is in some respects a comparison shopping center also.

More than $19 million is spent annually on clothing and accessories by consumers in Franklin's comparison-trade-area. Most of these expenditures are made in the newer shopping centers, large discount department stores and discount clothing stores. With just over 10,000 square feet of retail space, it is not surprising that downtown Franklin captures just over $700,000 in sales, accounting for only 3.6 percent of the available comparison-trade-area expenditures. A town center typically captures 5-10 percent of the total expenditures.

The apparel stores in downtown Franklin claim average or above-average sales, yet do not occupy enough space to provide more than a limited selection of goods. This category is comprised mostly of shoe and accessories stores with very little clothing actually available. The recent opening of a clothing retailer will provide a better balance of goods.

Shoppers' surveys ranked clothing stores very highly as an addition desired in the downtown. Although it usually is very difficult for a downtown such as Franklin's to attract major clothing stores, given the fact that most new clothing stores prefer and benefit from mall locations, the addition of smaller clothing stores might be achieved. Despite competition from other communities, shopping centers, and regional malls, Franklin's current lack of clothing stores and the presence of Dean Junior College provide a positive climate for smaller specialty clothing retailers.

Furniture and Appliances

For most consumers, the purchase of furniture or appliances is a major household investment. Products in this category cost more than other retail goods, and purchases are strongly influenced

by quality, price, and selection. In most cases, furniture and appliance sales are highest where there is ample opportunity for shoppers to compare items - places like Boston, regional shopping malls and commercial strips.

Franklin's furniture and appliance stores benefit from a relative lack of competition within the comparison-trade-area. Although significant numbers of shoppers are drawn to the various discount department stores within the area, and ultimately the regional malls, downtown Franklin captures a very strong 9.2 percent of the comparison-trade-area furniture and appliance expenditures. This equals over $1.3 million in sales. Typically, a downtown can expect to capture between 5 and 10 percent of the available expenditures. The downtown is fortunate to have a good mix of stores within this category, dominated by two furniture retailers.

Although currently capturing sales at the high end of the expected range, growth potential exists in this category through specialization. The addition of one more major furniture store or associated supporting stores could establish downtown Franklin as a center for furniture within the comparison-trade-area. Examples of such centers can be seen in Hudson, where there is a collection of hardware retailers; and Wellesley, where specialization occurs in the apparel category. Other categories offer better opportunities for increasing downtown Franklin's market capture, but expansion in the furniture and appliance category could provide additional stability and an expanded market base.

Miscellaneous Retail

Miscellaneous retail consists of those stores not classified elsewhere such as card/gift shops, jewelry stores and sporting goods. For purposes of sales confidentiality, two other major retail categories -- drugs, and hardware -- have been grouped under miscellaneous retail in this analysis.

In a typical downtown, one might expect a capture rate in the miscellaneous-retail categories of about five to 10 percent. Downtown Franklin's capture is 6.1 percent or just under $2 million of the total $31 million spent annually in this category. Because these are combined statistics for three distinct types of goods, the 6.1 percent capture is misleading. To provide a more accurate picture, characteristics of each of the three retail types grouped under miscellaneous retail are discussed.

1. Drugs

A typical community shopping district often captures 10-15% of the total convenience-trade-area expenditures in the drug category. Convenience goods do well in older town centers and local pharmacies are frequently anchor establishments. Downtown Franklin's drugstores capture sales within the typical range, although they do not serve as anchoring establishments.

Like food stores, pharmacies have been faced increasingly with stiff competition from new community shopping centers. Large discount stores, and convenience-oriented "mini marts" also capture a large share of the health and beauty aids market. Given the competition from elsewhere in Franklin and the presence of two pharmacies and two convenience markets in the downtown, no important growth in this category is projected.

2. Hardware/Building Supplies

Hardware and building supplies are difficult to label as purely convenience or comparison items. Shopping done in local hardware stores can be as incidental as buying a few nails or as significant as the purchase of expensive power equipment.

Downtown Franklin's hardware retailers face competition from both within Franklin and surrounding communities. In addition to more traditional hardware and building supply centers, many large discount stores carry lines of convenience-oriented hardware products. Basic tools, nails and screws, and in some cases a small assortment of lumber can be purchased in some shopping center locations. Downtown Franklin's retailers are relatively small and capture only a small portion of the available expenditures. Given the current competition and retail trends, it is unlikely that growth in this category will occur in the downtown.

3. Miscellaneous Retail

Establishments such as cards/gifts, sporting goods, and jewelers are included in the retail mix for this category and have sales over $1.3 million. When trade area expenditures for drugs and hardware are discounted, miscellaneous retail sales account for a healthy 7.4 percent of the total comparison-trade-area expenditures. A downtown typically captures 5-10 percent in this category.

Retailers in this group offer a variety of both convenience and comparison goods, which provides some balance for the downtown's overall retail mix. Some of the businesses however, are marginal operations, located in poorly maintained buildings, and poorly located stores.

Since, as noted, store variety is essential to the success of small downtowns, the miscellaneous-retail category is important. The downtown is fortunate to have as broad a mix as it does, but especially in convenience goods, additional growth and variety in miscellaneous retail stores will further improve the downtown. To be effective, these new establishments must cater to the tastes and needs of local patrons. Retail goods should be targeted to local consumer groups such as students, commuters, or the growing elderly population.

General Merchandise

General merchandise refers to the kind of retail business which provides numerous types of goods and services under a single roof. Included in this category are department stores, discount outlets, catalogue showrooms and 5-and-10 cent stores. There are no general merchandise establishments in the downtown. Franklin therefore, is capturing very little of the approximately $45 million spent in general merchandise stores by shoppers in the comparison trade area. In smaller downtowns, certain miscellaneous retail businesses often fulfill some of the convenience needs usually provided by a general merchandise store. This is the case in Franklin, but there remains strong shopper demand for a more extensive selection of these goods.

The expected capture in the general merchandise category for a small downtown is between five and 10 percent of trade area expenditures. This translates into over $2.2 million in uncaptured general merchandise sales in downtown Franklin.

A small general merchandise store would be an asset and complement to Franklin's retail mix. Through proper site location and design, such a facility could generate substantial spill-over activity, benefitting other downtown retailers.

SUMMARY

Like many older commercial districts, downtown Franklin has lost much of its market share. Overall capture is currently below average at 4.5 percent; a more typical rate would fall between five and 10 percent. Although current market conditions indicate that the downtown's capture and sales levels are strong in some areas, several factors are seriously affecting the downtown's business climate.

- Competition for convenience shoppers, those looking for food, drugs, etc. exists within Franklin on both sides of the downtown. The effect has been the near elimination of food shopping within the downtown. Typically, food stores are anchor establishments within older downtowns and create spin-off shopping at other stores.

- The absence of food retailers or a general merchandise store - another typical downtown anchor - has shifted the role of anchoring the downtown to the banks and Post Office. These establishments, however, do not generate spin-off shopping as readily as retail stores since they tend to be the single destination of many of their users.

- Two of the three convenience categories - Eating and Drinking and Personal Services - are saturated with businesses differing little in quality or goods. This situation hinders the development of an appealing retail mix. In other categories the small size, limited goods selection, and in some cases poor location of businesses further affect the downtown's ability to attract shoppers and capture sales.

To improve its current situation, the downtown must begin to compete more aggressively for convenience trade area sales. A better retail mix, the targetting of sales to particular populations, and general organization of businesses and merchandising practices will improve the downtown's business climate. Physical improvements to patterns such as traffic, parking, storefront design, and pedestrian amenities will further improve the image and attractiveness of the area.

1987 MARKET OUTLOOK

The existing market structure is what causes growth, stagnation or decline. It is important then, to understand fully the characteristics which influence and shape the downtown Franklin market area. From previous sections of this report, certain factors emerge. These factors will affect the relative performance of downtown Franklin's economy within the projected period.

1. Downtown Franklin competes in two distinct trade areas, convenience and comparison. Both are characterized by population and income growth.

2. Downtown Franklin is a community scale shopping district capturing a mix of convenience and comparison sales. Strong competition surrounds the downtown for convenience goods, while somewhat weaker competition for comparison goods is present.

3. Downtown Franklin has an even mix of goods and services, but contains more comparison oriented space than convenience retail space. The downtown has fair store variety, and a relatively high percentage of vacant space.

4. Business and shopper surveys indicate that the downtown functions mainly as a convenience shopping area. Major problems identified by these surveys related to parking, traffic, store variety and appearance.

5. Although Dean Junior College students were represented in shopper surveys, and business people acknowledged their contribution to overall sales the numerous commuters who take the train into Boston daily, currently are not a part of downtown Franklin's shopping population.

6. As a group, merchants in downtown Franklin capture a below average 4.5 percent of the total trade-area expenditures. Weak areas include the food and apparel retail categories. An average overall market capture ranges from five to 10 percent.

When projecting the 1987 market, it is important to bear in mind these six factors. Table 5 shows in dollars the implications of decreased, unchanged or increased market activity in the downtown as discussed under Conditions I, II, and III below.

TABLE 5

PROJECTED TRADE AREA EXPENDITURES

Condition	Trade Area Expenditures	Downtown Sales	% Capture
Current - 1982	$146,780,300	$6,608,700	4.5
Projected - 1987			
Condition I Decreased Capture	$177,389,100	$7,462,500	4.2
Condition II Constant Capture	$177,389,100	$7,982,500	4.5
Condition III Increased Capture	$177,389,100	$9,307,700	5.2

SOURCE: Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 1983.

(Note: All figures are adjusted for inflation.)

CONDITION I: DECREASED CAPTURE

If downtown Franklin's problems with retail mix, competition and poor physical conditions are not resolved, decreases in sales activity can be expected through 1987. As shown in Table 5, a 0.3 percent drop in overall capture, or a loss of approximately $520,000 in sales for 1987, is projected under this condition. In absolute numbers these amounts may appear small, but it is important to remember that the town is currently capturing only 4.5 percent of the total trade area expenditures available. With its current capture rate just below the expected range, downtown Franklin cannot afford to slip further behind. A drop in its capture rate would represent economic decline.

A number of factors present in downtown Franklin may contribute to a decrease in overall capture.

-- Continued problems with retail mix, category saturation, and vacant space will limit sales and may foster business failures. As discussed, if downtown Franklin's merchants do not work toward diversifying their selection of goods and services they can expect decreasing market captures through 1987.

-- Continued physical problems including traffic patterns, parking, and general appearance and design will result in fewer shoppers and declining sales levels. If the current problems are not addressed the downtown can expect business relocations and declining economic activity through 1987.

-- Additional commercial development elsewhere in Franklin's trade areas will create additional pressure, and this new competition could force losses and lower sales levels. If downtown merchants don't work to market the downtown aggressively, they can expect declining sales through 1987.

The projected drop of $520,000 in sales under Condition I would translate into a loss of approximately 8,500 square feet of retail space and falling sales levels for many businesses. It is expected that marginal operations in the categories of eating and drinking, apparel, drugs and miscellaneous retail would be most affected.

CONDITION II: CONSTANT CAPTURE

If downtown Franklin's merchants address the current problems and limitations, their capture rate can remain constant at 4.5 percent. As indicated in Table 5, gross sales levels will rise through 1987 by approximately $1.4 million in response to increasing population and income levels, but although this may appear to be growth, it is merely keeping pace. Most importantly, the current practices and strategies are not adequate to maintain the current capture rate.

As outlined in the Decreased Capture scenario, there are a number of factors which must be addressed in order for downtown Franklin to maintain its market share. Improvements in retail mix, storefront appearance and design, the physical condition of streets and parking areas, and marketing strategies to target additional shoppers are necessary elements in a larger, cooperative strategy for downtown revitalization.

Specific actions which will enhance downtown Franklin's ability to maintain its current capture rate and economic status include:

-- improvements in retail mix which diminish saturation of retail types and promote a broadening of the range of convenience oriented goods offered.

-- formation of a merchants association to coordinate advertising, store hours, and promotions; and to target sales to consumer groups such as commuters and students.

-- physical improvements for the appearance and functioning of the downtown including storefront design, traffic and parking facilities.

CONDITION III: INCREASED CAPTURE

The increased capture scenario projected is dependent on both implementation of improvement programs as outlined in the constant capture example, and expansion of the retail base within the downtown. As Table 5 indicates, improvements coupled with the addition of new businesses could result in an additional $1.3 million in sales above the constant capture level. This would boost downtown Franklin's overall capture rate to 5.2 percent.

As previously discussed, one of the key techniques for establishing and maintaining a competitive downtown given increasing shopping-mall competition is to provide consumers with an interesting mix of goods and services. With a first floor vacancy rate of 5.5 percent and a number of marginal businesses, Franklin should attract merchants to its downtown that will add variety to its current selection. Businesses that replace marginal operations, relocated stores or existing vacancies should offer goods or services currently scarce or not available in the downtown. The shopper survey results and market conditions conclusions show clear potential for additional food, apparel, general merchandise, and miscellaneous retail stores.

As detailed in the previous chapter there are very few food stores in the downtown, yet shopper demand is high. It is unlikely that the downtown will be able to attract a major supermarket. Growth in this category is possible however, through increases in the number of specialty food retailers such as a fish market, a fruit and vegetable market, and an expanded or additional bakery. Additional stores such as these which offer a complementary mix of goods will allow the downtown to offer a more complete range of products.

There is limited opportunity for growth in the Apparel and Accessories category. This is another area where demand is high but dramatic increases cannot be expected given existing competition. Any increase is likely to occur as a result of marginal businesses closing and more successful clothiers replacing them. The successful merchants will be those who target sales to specific or growing consumer groups such as students or children.

Strong possibilities for growth exist in the Miscellaneous Retail category. As retail space turns over, efforts should be made to attract stores that will add variety to the downtown, such as bookstores, florists, and craft shops. Reasonable rent structures in downtown Franklin are ideal for start-up businesses or local craftsmen seeking the visibility a storefront provides. New stores should target sales to the needs of the trade area, and given that downtown Franklin is more successful as a convenience center, stores that cater to the convenience shopper will naturally have the best chance of success.

A final category in which growth is possible is Furniture and Appliances. Although the current capture is high, the lack of significant competition suggests that this category might be one in which downtown Franklin could specialize. As detailed in the previous chapter the entire downtown could benefit from the development of additional stores carrying complementary goods. This could lead to the emergence of downtown Franklin as a regional center for these items.

While the replacement of marginal businesses and the development of some new retail establishments is important to growth, the improvement of existing businesses is equally crucial. Many of the more successful businesses in the downtown prosper by providing good-quality merchandise at reasonable prices and by capitalizing on the kind of personalized service that can be offered in a small town center. In the face of competition from regional malls, fostering local support through personal service, competitive pricing, and effective promotional schemes are ways to boost sales and profits. Of course, adding new merchandise lines that meet changing buying patterns is also important to existing businesses.

As discussed under Conditions I and II, physical improvements are also essential to the growth and stability of the downtown. Good urban design, better traffic circulation, and ample parking are key elements in capturing additional trade-area dollars.

To summarize, a 0.7 percent increase in overall capture for downtown Franklin in 1987 will require improvements on the part of both existing businesses and the town, as well as retail expansion in areas that will create a better balance of goods and services. Through efforts to create a more interesting and diverse shopping environment, both commercially and aesthetically, downtown Franklin could anticipate economic growth through 1987.

traffic

As one of the key elements of the Franklin center revitalization efforts, a study of downtown traffic conditions and potential improvements has been undertaken. The first phase of that study has been a thorough investigation of existing conditions. This has been accomplished through an inventory of existing streets and traffic circulation patterns, field studies of existing traffic volumes and operations, and analyses of existing hazards and alternative circulation systems.

STUDY AREA

The project area selected for inclusion in the Franklin center revitalization study has been designed to include all of the downtown businesses. In general, the downtown business district is well defined with relatively sharp boundaries with the rest of the community. To the north, west and south this area is largely confined to the lots facing the central triangle defined by Main, West Central and Emmons Streets with a significant extension into the area of the Municipal/MBTA parking lots. This is not true eastward along East Central, however.

In order to include all businesses in business surveys, etc. the project area has been extended to Ruggles Street. The area much east of Summer Street, however, does not function with the general characteristics of the downtown traffic, flowing much more freely and having very different parking characteristics. Consequently, this area has not been included in detailed traffic and parking studies, lest it distort the downtown results and place disproportionate demand on manpower available for traffic studies, already in very limited supply.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Downtown Franklin is served by the MBTA's Franklin Branch commuter rail line. The terminus of this line is located in Franklin Center adjacent to the municipal parking lot. This location determines much of the traffic pattern of the downtown and parking characteristics in the immediate area during certain hours. The MBTA lot has a capacity of 129 spaces and is always full. In addition, the municipal lot has a capacity of 91 spaces and is also almost always full, mostly with commuters. This represents a total of over 200 trip ends dedicated to commuter parking needs. Additional traffic is generated by commuters who use the station for kiss and ride drop-offs, significantly increasing peak hour traffic on the local streets.

TABLE 1

Commuter Rail Schedule - Weekdays

	Lv. Franklin	Ar. Boston		Lv. Boston	Ar. Franklin
A.M.	6:03	6:55	A.M.	9:00	9:42
	6:50	7:39		10:47	11:35
	7:22	8:10	P.M.	2:45	3:34
	10:10	10:57		4.02	4:52
	12:00	12:47		5:05	5:51
	3:55	4:41		5:25	6:21
	5:02	5:41		6:11	6:58
	7:08	7:55		7:25	8:13
	8:28	9:11		9:05	9:53
	10:28	11:10		11:05	12:38

One way fare is $2.50 to Boston South Station with monthly T passes available.

EXISTING CIRCULATION

Street System

Franklin Center is served by a network of streets ranging from small local roads to regionally significant arterials. The entire street pattern is dominated by State numbered route 140 that directly traverses the center of town.

In an earlier entirely locally generated effort to improve intersection congestion, a full one-way circulation system was instituted. This system effectively routes all west-bound traffic on Rte. 140, whether destined for the downtown or not, through the center of town on Main Street and across Emmons before rejoining Rte. 140 at West Central Street. Although this has effectively relieved intersection congestion at the intersection of Main and West Central Streets, it has done nothing to relieve problems at the intersections of Cottage and Summer Streets and East Central Street. It has also induced a number of conditions that have had bad effect on the downtown:

1. by creating a wide thoroughfare with no opposing flow, speeds have become quite high on Main Street resulting in a very dangerous situation for pedestrian and drivers alike,

2. by routing all through traffic along Emmons Street, an additional bottleneck is created where Emmons attempts to rejoin Rte. 140, and

3. the full one-way system has induced a substantial amount of circulational flow (traffic volume that exists only because it is necessary to drive around the block to reach a nearby destination), estimated at between 10% and 30% of the total volume depending on the time of day and other conditions.

In addition, the roadway geometrics and general condition are inadequate to handle the circulation as presently defined. The turning radii at some intersections are drastically too small - particularly at the intersection of Emmons and Main, traffic control is inadequate, and both Emmons and West Central through the key downtown legs are too narrow. This is complicated on West Central by very poor roadway surface conditions, poorly defined curbs leading to partial parking in the roadway and by utility poles entirely within the roadway further narrowing both the actual and especially the perceived available width.

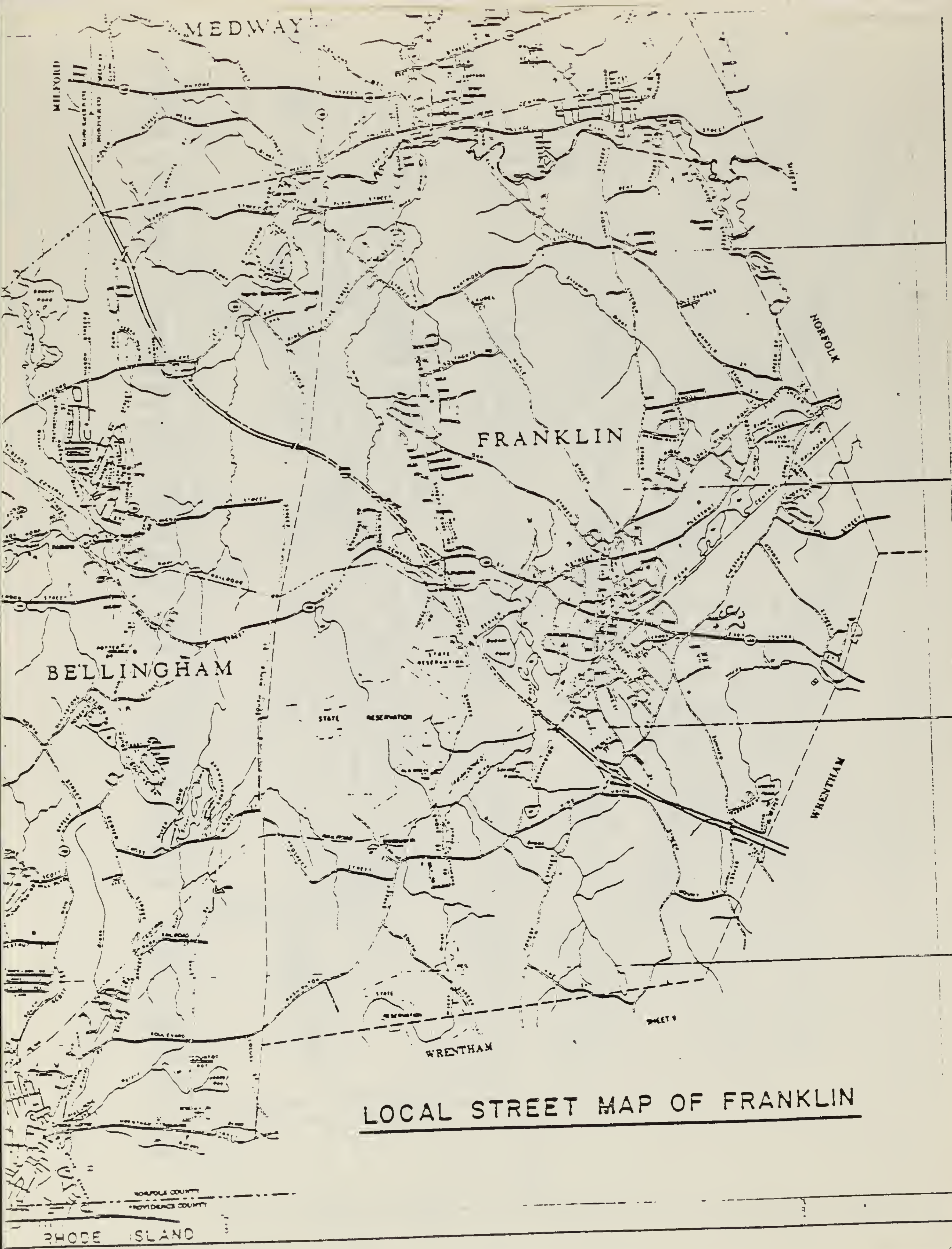
Access to adjacent uses is unrestricted and sometimes chaotic on downtown streets with on-street parking and occasional deliveries on Main and East Central Streets and curb cuts throughout the downtown. The relatively high speeds induced by the one way system and the multiple curb cuts provide for very serious vehicular/vehicular and vehicular/pedestrian conflicts throughout the downtown. The near total absence of traffic controls on the main legs of the circulation system make crossing the street, at times, nearly impossible. There are no signalized intersections within the downtown.

TABLE 2

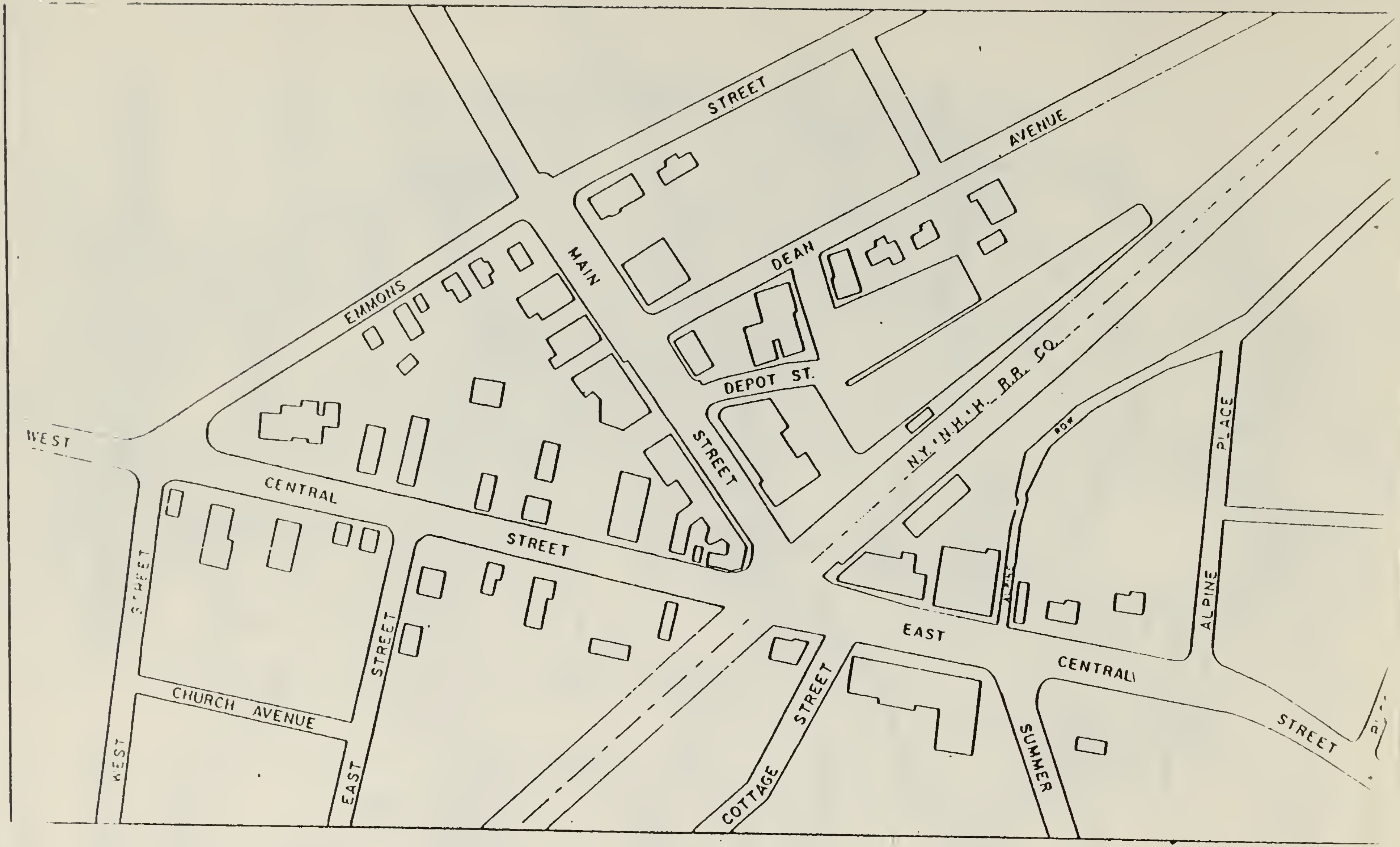
Major Street Characteristics (Typical)

Street	Typical Width (curb to curb	Traffic Flow	On-Street Parking
Summer Street	27'	2 way	one side
Cottage Street	32'	2 way	none
East Central (Rte. 140)			
Summer to Cottage	57'	2 way	both sides
Main Street (Rte. 140-pt.)			
Central to Dean	41'	1 way WB	both sides
Dean to Emmons	59'	1 way WB	both sides
West of Emmons	34'	2 way	none
Depot Street	32'	2 way	both sides
Dean Avenue	29'	2 way	one side
Emmons Street (Rte. 140-pt.)			
Main to Central	24'	1 way WB	none
North to Main	29'	2 way	one side
West Central (Rte. 140-pt.)			
Emmons to Main	28-30'*	1 way EB	none
West of Emmons	26'	2 way	none
East Street	31'	2 way	both sides
West Street	26'	2 way	both sides

*effective width narrowed to 28' or less by utility poles within travelled way.



LOCAL STREET MAP OF FRANKLIN



FRANKLIN CENTER REVITALIZATION PROJECT

Traffic Volumes

In the course of this analysis, two separate types of traffic counts have been made: turning movement counts at large downtown intersections conducted during peak hours (morning, evening and mid-day), and an all day (14 hour) cordon count. The first of these two types of counts is used to determine intersection function and provides the data necessary for intersection design improvements. The cordon count is a more general type of analysis and counts all vehicles entering and leaving the downtown on all roads. From this study it is possible to determine overall traffic volumes, hourly variations over the day, and accumulation of parked vehicles within the downtown and to estimate the origin and destination of vehicles traversing the downtown. From this information, the effects of any change in the circulation system may be estimated.

The MAPC conducted a cordon count of downtown Franklin on April 27, 1983 from 5:30 AM to 7:30 PM, using community personnel to perform the actual counting. These times were selected to span commuters arriving and leaving on the major commuter rail runs to and from Boston as well as people using the downtown.

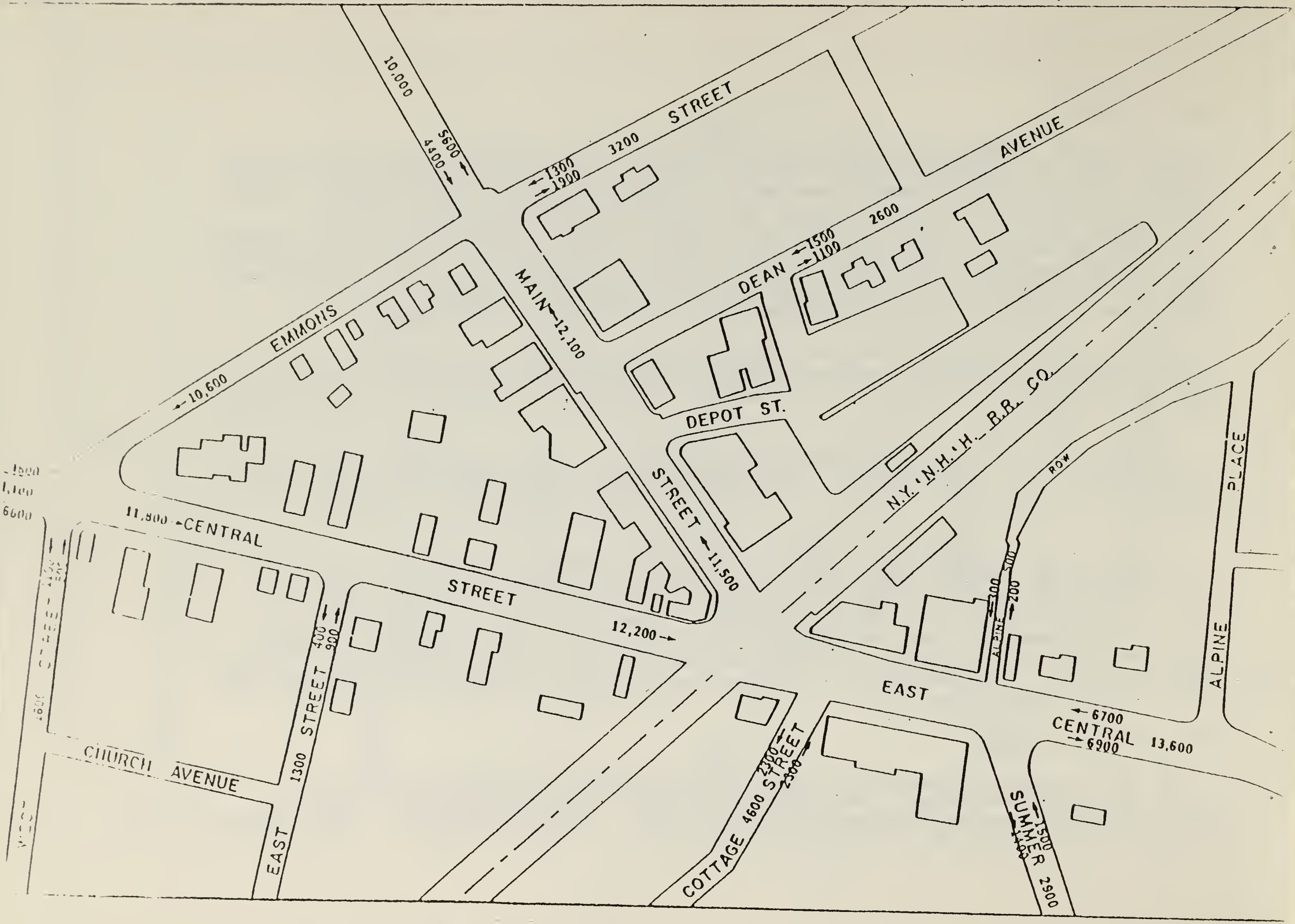
From the information developed in these counts, estimates of total directional traffic volumes have been made for all downtown streets. These have been expressed as annualized average daily traffic (AADT) figures, i.e, they have been adjusted to compensate for monthly and weekly variations in traffic flow.

The AADT's for downtown Franklin tend to be high, particularly on those streets which function as legs of Rte. 140. None of these volumes are, however, unreasonable for finding solutions in terms of conventional small-town layouts and controls. The highest figures encountered in Franklin, 13,600 on East Central Street and just over 16,000 on segments of Main and West Central Streets, are all well below the more extreme figures encountered in other communities. Problems are encountered because of roadway geometrics and dimensions, poor roadway conditions and inadequate control. Problems specific to the downtown are induced by routing a major through route unnecessarily through the downtown.

Hourly Traffic Variations

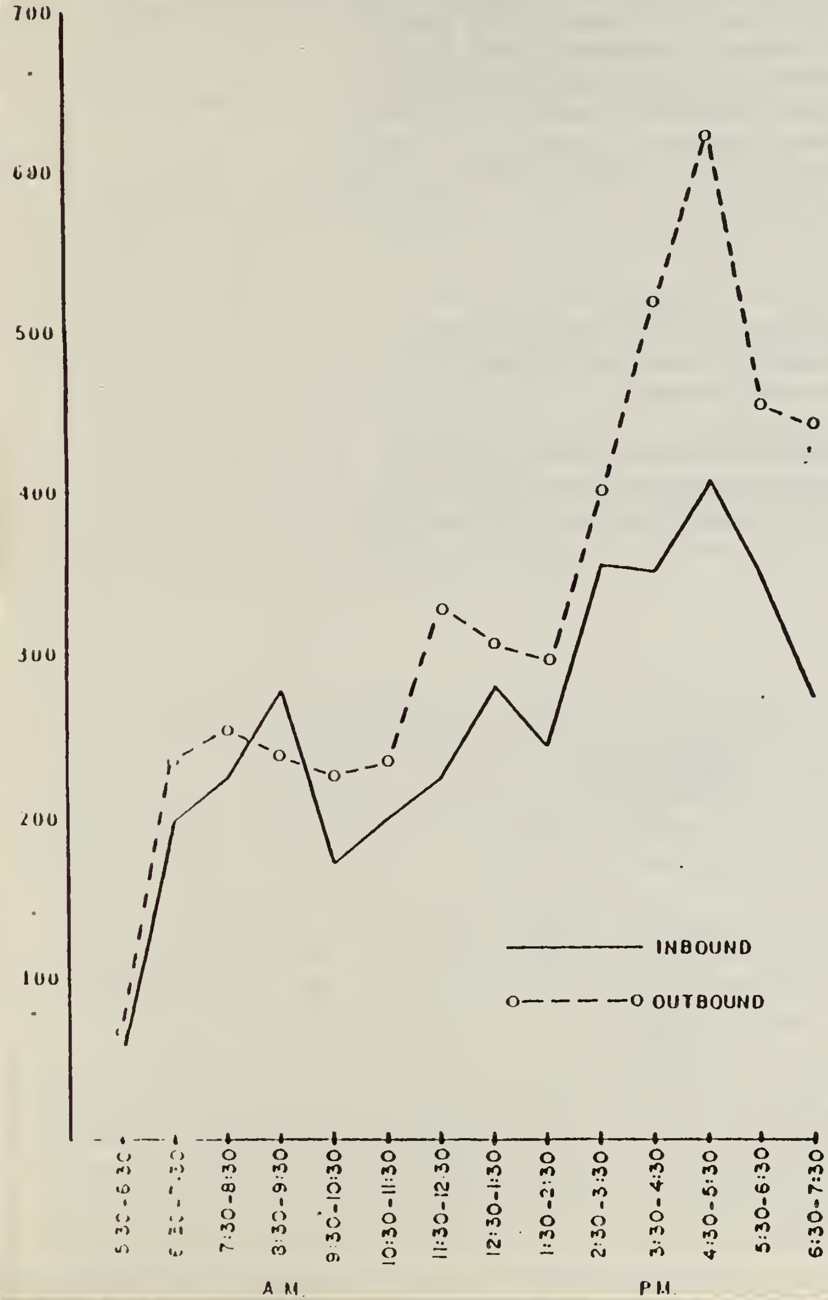
The traffic counts as conducted by the MAPC allow an analysis of the hourly variation of traffic flow. The information is contained in detail in the appendix to this report. Two such graphs are included here for illustration.

ANNUALIZED AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)

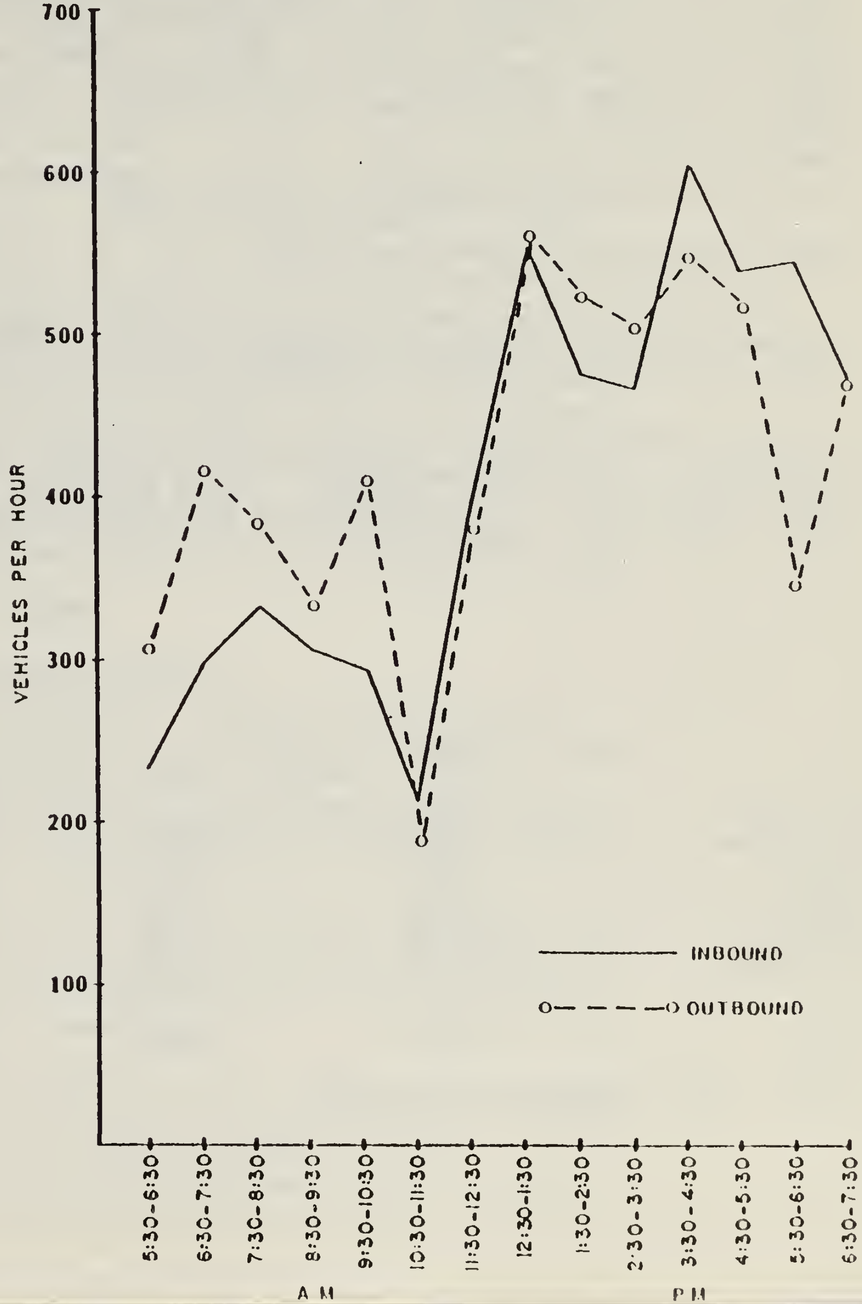


FRANKLIN CENTER REVITALIZATION AREA

JRLY TRAFFIC VARIATIONS ALONG MAIN STREET
WEST OF EMMONS STREET
ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 1983



HOURLY TRAFFIC VARIATIONS ALONG EAST CENTR
STREET EAST OF SUMMER STREET
ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 1983



Despite the very strong commuter orientation of the MBTA station and the commuting characteristics of downtown itself, both streets exhibit more of the characteristics of a through highway than of a route serving a downtown. Main Street, at this location not even a part of Rte. 140, shows only minimal reversal of the outbound dominance in the morning. Although East Central Street does show a characteristic reversal of inbound and outbound travel, the directions are inverted with outbound dominating the morning hours and inbound dominating the evening. Further, there is a greater total volume later in the day. Both of these characteristics are typical of a commuter oriented, through route, carrying substantial amounts of non-commuter (commerce, shipping, general travel) traffic throughout the day. The downtown in general and Main Street in particular are being unnecessarily asked to carry this load.

Factors Affecting Future Traffic Volumes

The urban growth fringe has reached Franklin. Traditionally slow growth is likely to be supplemented by spurts of new development for both residences and industry with attendant commercial development. With this new growth is likely to come increased traffic.

Based on MAPC population projections, both Franklin and its neighbors are projected to grow substantially over the coming decade. Total growth for the eighties is expected to be 19.1% for Franklin and 22.0% for Franklin and the surrounding communities. This translates to 1.3% and 1.4% annual growth rates, respectively.

TABLE 3

Projected Population

	1980	1985	1990	% Change 1980-1990
Franklin	18,217	20,000	21,700	19.1
Bellingham	14,300	15,600	16,900	
Medway	8,447	9,200	10,000	
Millis	6,908	7,900	8,800	
Norfolk	6,363	7,400	8,500	
Wrentham	7,580	8,500	9,500	
TOTAL	61,815	68,600	75,400	22.0

SOURCE: MAPC Population Projections.

This population growth, coupled with employment growth and a continuing increased reliance on automobile transportation may be expected to result in continuing increases in traffic volumes. A recent study by Storch Engineers for a development near I-495 on Rte. 140 has suggested that traffic growth might be 5.3% for four years or 1.3% annually. However, MDPW engineers at the District 6 office have suggested that this would be too low - a contention that would appear to be borne out by the population growth figures above.

Historical data on traffic volumes are available for certain locations where the MDPW maintains permanent control counting stations. Although no such station is located close enough to provide a direct view of historical traffic growth in downtown Franklin, two stations have been examined for their relevance to local conditions. These are station #61600, located on Rte. 140 in Norton at the Taunton city line and station #44000, located on Rte. 135 in Hopkinton at the Ashland town line. Both of these stations exhibit a reasonable trend, lacking wide variations that suggest some other outside influence or other properties that might suggest that they have become saturated or otherwise artificially affected. A trend line analysis of these two stations yields a 4.6% annual growth rate at station #61600 and a 2.4% annual growth rate at station #44000. The 4.6% annual rate appears to be somewhat high, especially in that it does not reflect data for years after 1979, a period which has generally seen something of a reduction in traffic growth. Based on these figures, it would not be unreasonable to project a 2-3% annual growth rate for traffic volumes in the downtown - a figure that is consistent with both population growth and traffic growth rates in other areas of the Boston region.

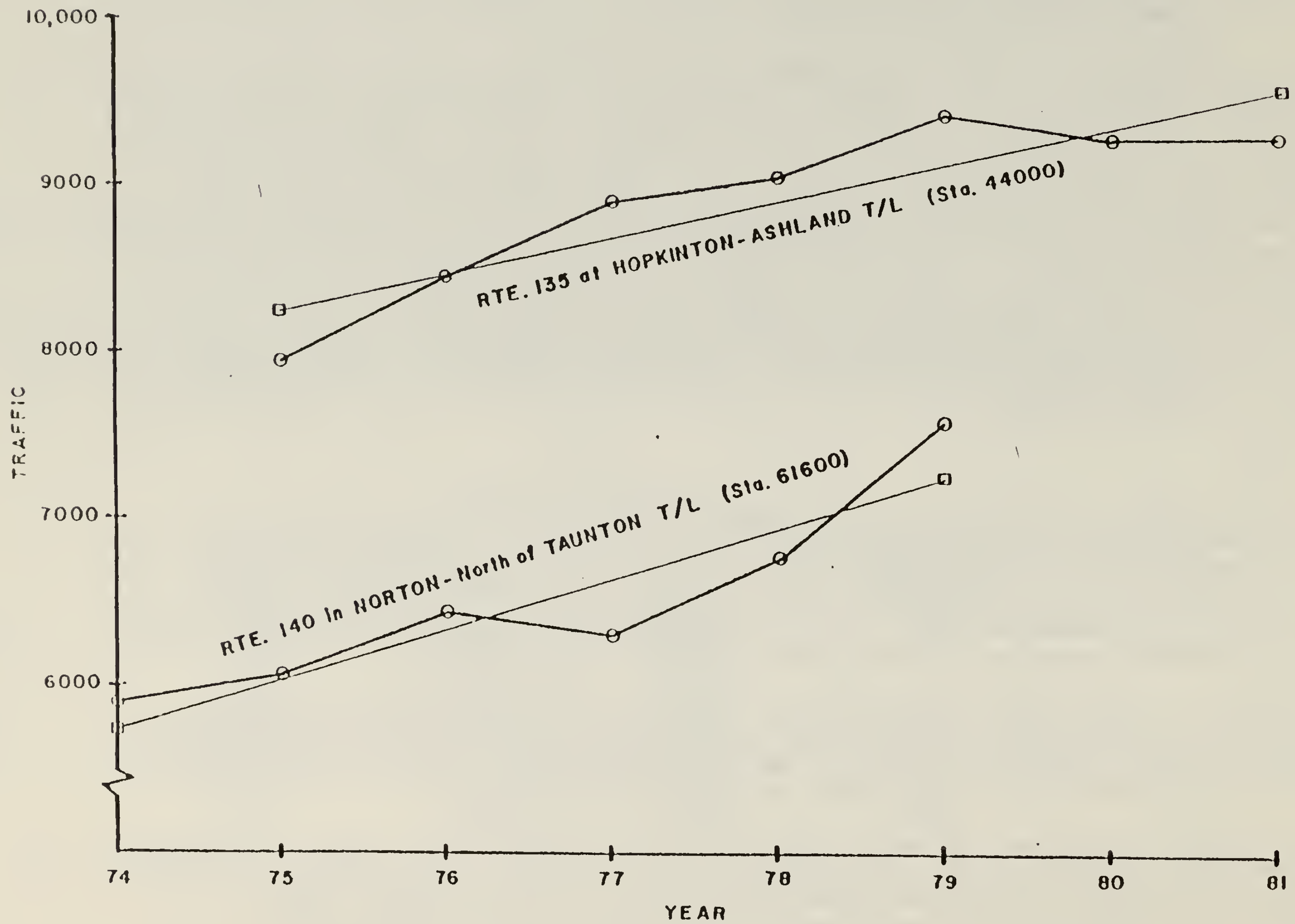
Level of Service

The characteristics of traffic that affects people most severely are congestion and safety. Congestion is measured with a concept called level of service (l.o.s.). Because it reflects a wide range of information and conditions, levels of service is not expressed as a number, but as a letter: "A" through "F". It is helpful to think of these as grades, like in school, for the level of service that is being measured, with l.o.s. "A" completely free of congestion and delay, l.o.s. "C" exhibiting moderate congestion and delay and l.o.s. "F" a complete failure.

In Franklin, as in most small centers, traffic flow characteristics are entirely determined by the intersections. It is at those locations that congestion develops and back-ups are created that can then go on to affect the other legs of the circulation system. Because of this, level of service has been evaluated at key intersections throughout the downtown.

Level of service is developed for each intersection by relating the total traffic volume during each peak hour to the capacity of the intersection and other operational characteristics. Peak hour volumes are obtained by morning and evening counts of each turning movement at each intersection. As is usually found in small business districts, the peak volumes occurred at all intersections in the afternoon rush, in this case, usually between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M.

HISTORIC TRAFFIC PATTERNS IN THE FRANKLIN REGION



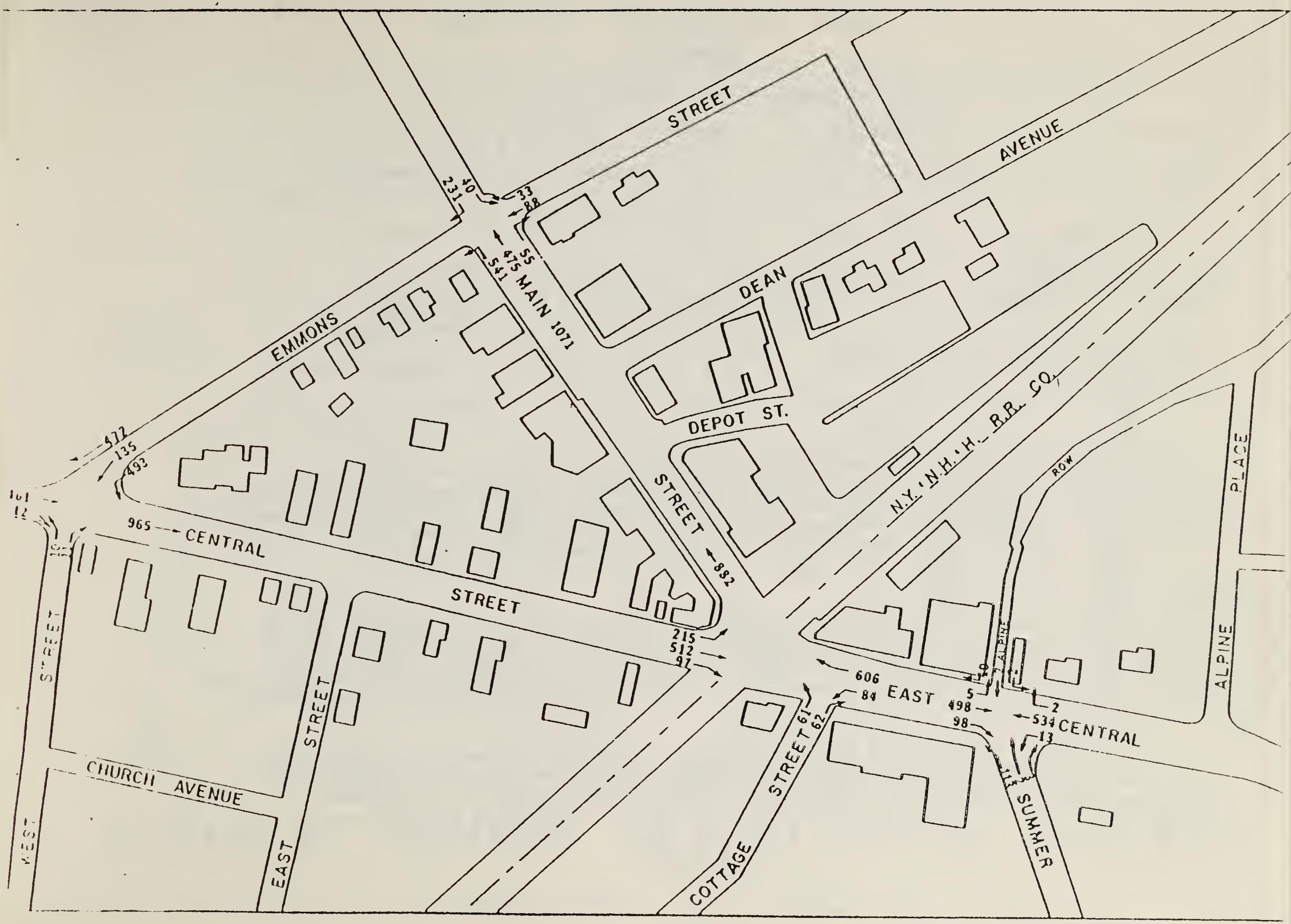

STREET
AVENUE
EMMONS
DEAN
MAIN
STREET
DEPOT ST.
N.Y. N.H. H. R.R. CO.
ROW
PLACE
CENTRAL
STREET
EAST
CENTRAL
ALPINE
ALPINE
STREET
CHURCH AVENUE
STREET
EAST
WEST
COTTAGE
STREET
SUMMER
40
231
33
88
55
475
541
1071
882
572
135
493
161
12
965
215
512
97
606
84
61
62
5
498
98
2
534
13

TABLE 4

Level of Service at Key Downtown Intersections

Intersection	Peak Hour	Movement	Level of Service
Emmons at W. Central	4:00-5:00 PM	right, straight left	C-average delay E-extreme congestion
West at W. Central	4:00-5:00 PM	all	D-long delay
West Central at Main	4:00-5:00 PM	left on to Main	D-long delay
Cottage at E. Central	4:15-5:15 PM	right left	A-no delay E-very long delay
Summer at E. Central	4:00-5:00	all	E-extreme congestion
Alpine Row at E. Central	4:00-5:00 PM	all	C-average delay

Based on these counts, it is clear that most key locations in the downtown experience substantial amounts of congestion at peak hours. This congestion does not arise from any single cause but is due to a variety of separate factors, all acting to worsen traffic flow: inadequate levels of traffic control at key intersections, poor roadway conditions and geometry, excessive friction due to curb cuts and induced traffic volumes due to one-way circulation.

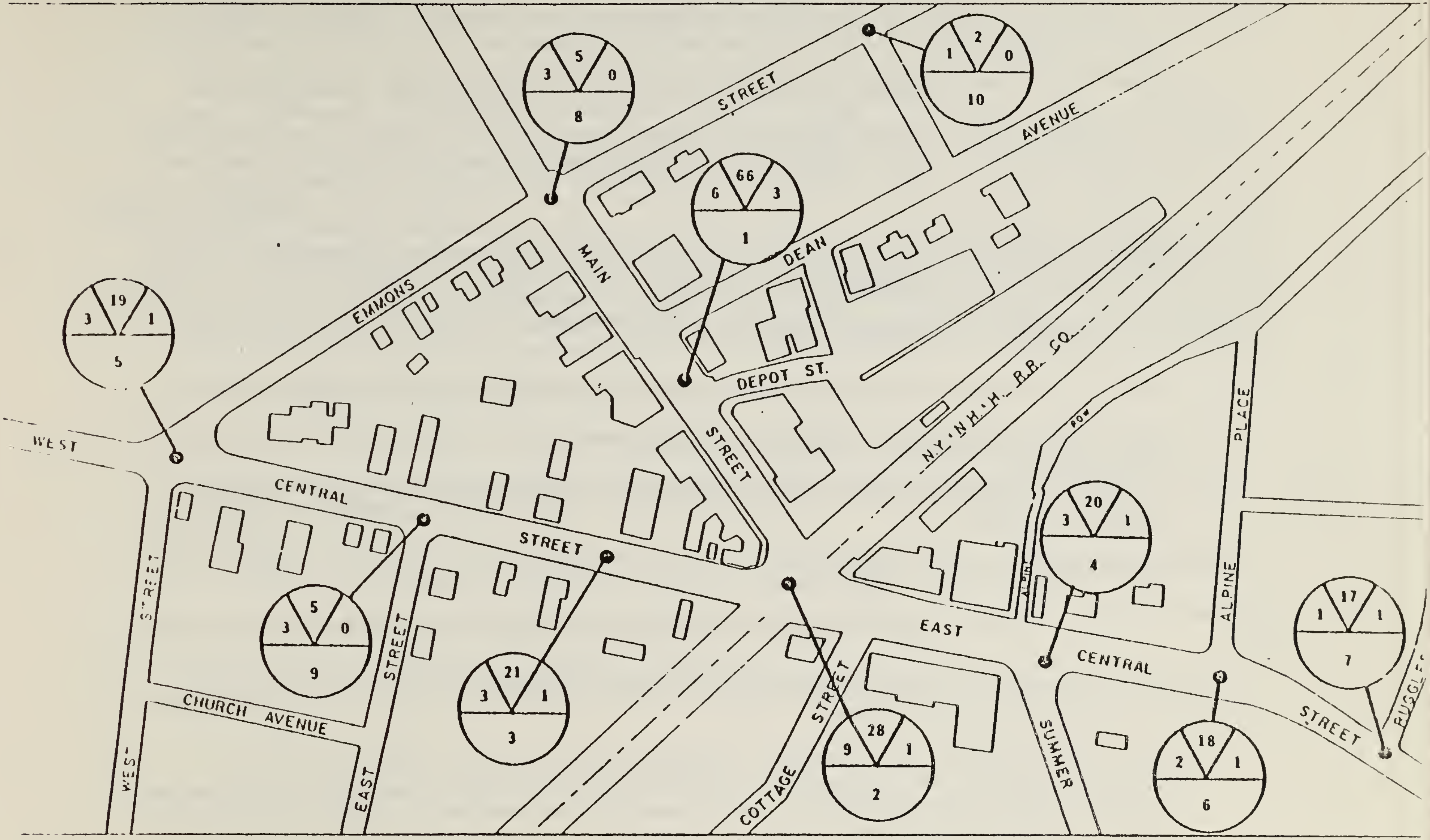
TRAFFIC SAFETY

An analysis of traffic safety has been conducted for the downtown by examining all accident reports for the area on file with the Franklin Police Department for the years 1981 and 1982. Since the safety of an area can only be determined by relating the frequency and severity of accidents to the level of exposure to potential accidents, the MDPW hazard index has been used to analyze these data.

In the two year analysis period there were a total of 50 accidents reported in the downtown. Of these 42 were property damage accidents and 8 resulted in personal injury. There are some characteristics of the downtown as a whole that seem worth mentioning. An unusually high percentage (42%) of accidents occurred at night suggesting the possibility of either poor visibility or

HAZARD SUMMARY SHEET

(1981-1982)



FRANKLIN CENTER REVITALIZATION PROJECT

alcohol involvement. The slight skewing of the distribution of accidents towards the end of the week, while normal, also suggests a possible problem with alcohol related accidents. There is also an unusually high proportion of accidents caused by backing up.

On the whole, the downtown compares quite favorably with other downtowns in eastern Massachusetts. Most locations are quite safe, with one important exception. One area of town stands out as quite unsafe: the portion of Main Street between Depot and Dean. The hazard index of 66 at this location is completely out of line with the rest of town and is a value that should be of some concern anywhere. Both the location of this high hazard area in the heart of the downtown shopping district and the particular reason for the hazard rating (a high incidence of personal injuries to pedestrians) are issues of major concern in a downtown revitalization effort. This condition will definitely interfere with revitalization efforts. The inclusion of a traffic hazard of this nature and severity cannot be tolerated in a shopping area. Not only are shoppers and employees lives actually endangered, but the resultant perception of hazard will help to keep people away and/or curtail their activity while in the downtown. This condition is the direct result of several mutually reinforcing factors:

1. high traffic volumes and speeds resulting from the routing of Rte. 140 along Main Street,

2. high speeds resulting from unopposed, one-way flows,

3. the behavior of drivers entering Main from Depot in particular who must be extremely vigilant of the high speed flow approaching from the left but have nothing to think about from the right, and

4. lack of adequate traffic controls.

The correction of this condition must be considered a top priority of the downtown revitalization effort.

Besides the condition on Main Street, there are no serious safety hazards within the downtown. Other conditions worthy of note, however:

- Railroad bridge area - the entrance of Cottage Street into the extremely broad and ill-defined area at the intersection of Main and Central Streets results in the second most hazardous location in the downtown. The presence of the freestanding watering trough here further complicates this area.

- o W. Central Street - East to Main - this area exhibits a number of serious design deficiencies that result in the third most hazardous location in the downtown. The deficiencies include too many curb cuts, very poor road surface, poor curb definition, inadequate width and presence of utility poles within the roadway.

- o E. Central at Summer - this area is too wide and inadequately controlled resulting in poor roadway definition and dangerous manuevers such as U-turns.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Traffic conditions within downtown Franklin are indeed serious and they represent a significant impediment to possible commercial improvements. Important issues uncovered in this study include:

1. Excessive traffic volumes and speeds along the principal shopping block induced by routing Rte. 140 through that area unnecessarily.
2. A traffic pattern dominated by through traffic on Rte. 140.
3. High Speeds and induced circulation resulting from the full one-way circulation system.
4. Congested and failing intersections resulting from poor roadway conditions, dimensions and geometry and inadequate control.
5. Poor roadway conditions and inadequate width on two major legs of the circulation system and excessive width with inadequate definition in other areas.
6. Excessive curb cuts resulting in safety and operational problems.
7. A major safety hazard and development impediment on Main Street.

Possible Downtown Traffic Improvements

Although the major approach to improving traffic in the downtown involves the relocation of through traffic on Route 140 from Main Street, there are a number of actions relevant to improvement no matter what approach is selected:

1. Every major intersection in town satisfies one or more warrants for signalization and is functioning with a sufficiently poor level of service to merit their installation. These intersections are: Emmons & West Central, Emmons & Main, Cottage & East Central and East Central & Summer.

2. Roadway condition throughout the downtown is very poor, especially on West Central. Utility poles should be removed and utilities placed underground and granite, non-mountable curbing installed. Roadways should be resurfaced throughout the downtown.

In addition to these minimal, remedial actions there are several exciting possibilities for making real improvements in downtown circulation and reaping substantial urban design benefits simultaneously. These include:

1. Already discussed, the reinstitution of a full, two-way circulation system throughout the downtown, thereby eliminating through, Route 140 traffic from Main Street. This will necessitate:

2. Widening and upgrading West Central Street from just west of West Street to the easterly end of the railroad bridge. At this time curb cuts should be reduced and the roadway generally upgraded. This would affect the two properties at the bridge.

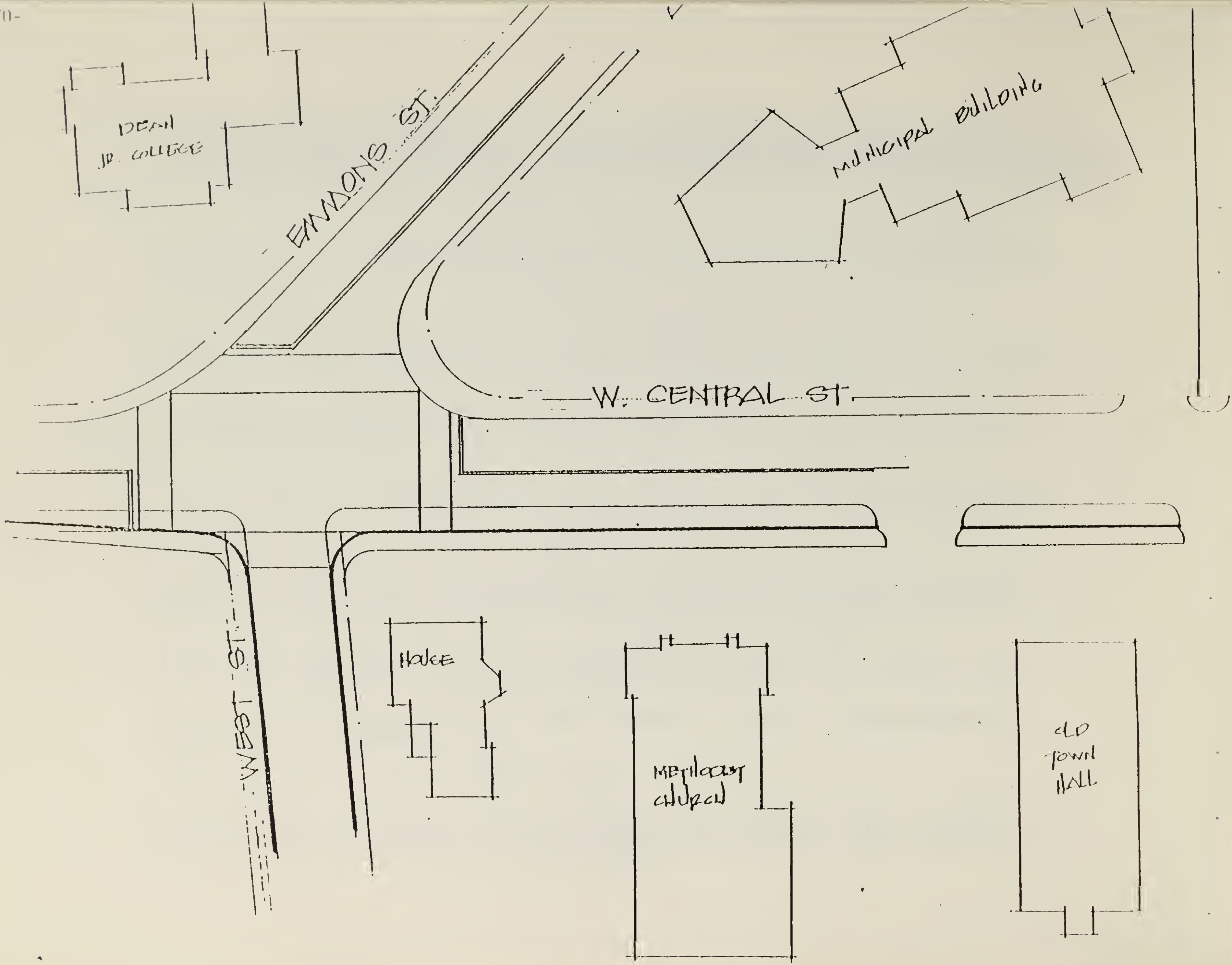
3. Channelize and signalize the Main Street, Central Street intersection. Making Cottage Street one-way, away from E. Central would improve operation.

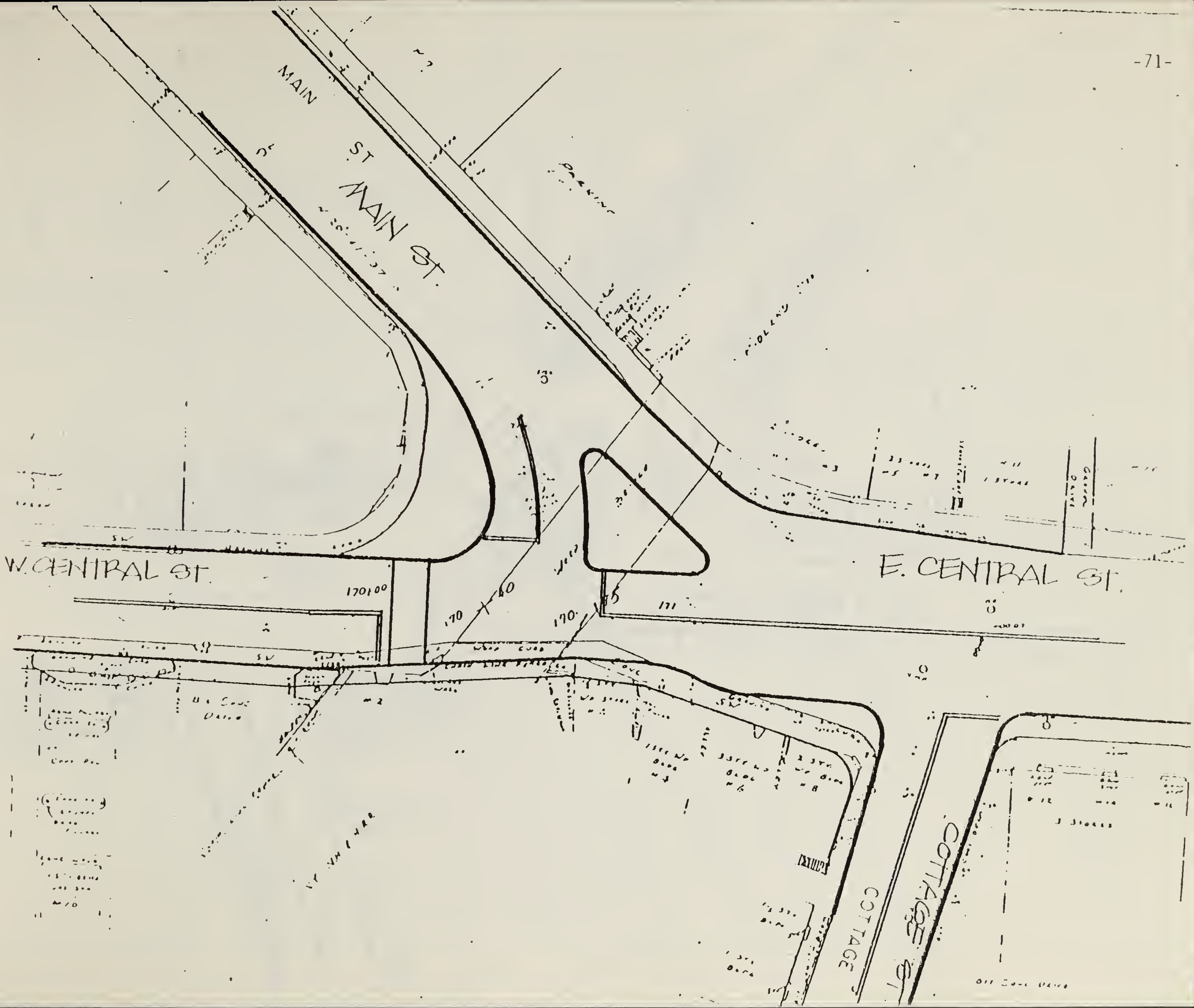
4. Narrow East Central from Cottage to Summer to provide for consistent road alignment and reduce dangerous movements.

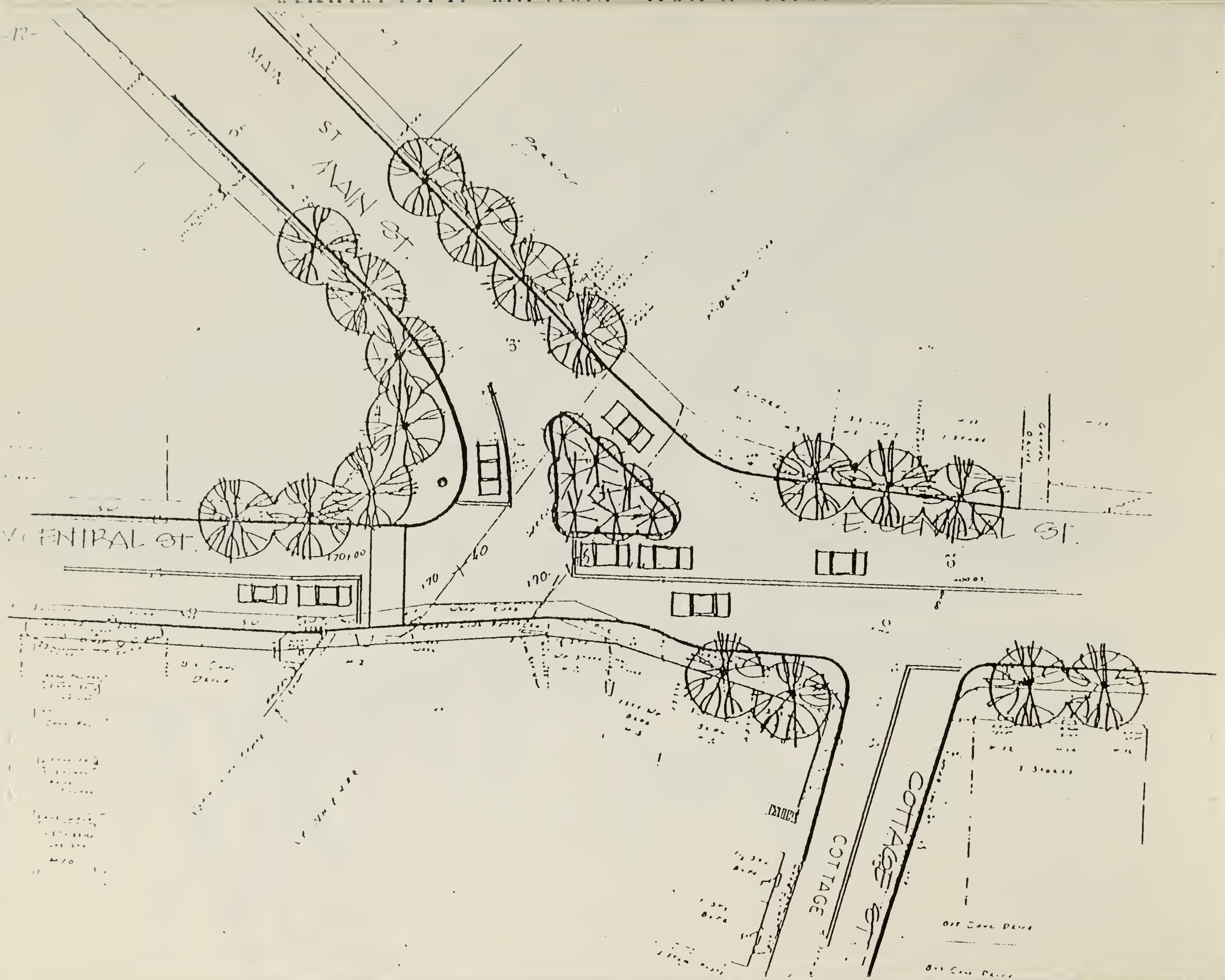
5. Reradius the westerly corner of Emmons and Main.

6. Make improvements along Main Street as discussed in urban design proposals. If this is not possible, consider making Depot one-way from Main and rerouting all traffic from lots through a signalized intersection at Main and Dean.

The rerouting of traffic as described above through signalized intersections will result in substantial improvements to traffic operation and safety. If all the above improvements are implemented, it should be possible to achieve level of service "A" throughout the downtown and existing traffic levels.


DEAN
JR. COLLEGE
EMMONS ST.
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
W. CENTRAL ST.
WEST ST.
HOUSE
METHODIST
CHURCH
OLD
TOWN
HALL


MAIN ST
MAIN ST.
W. CENTRAL ST.
E. CENTRAL ST.
COTTAGE
COTTAGE ST.
170+00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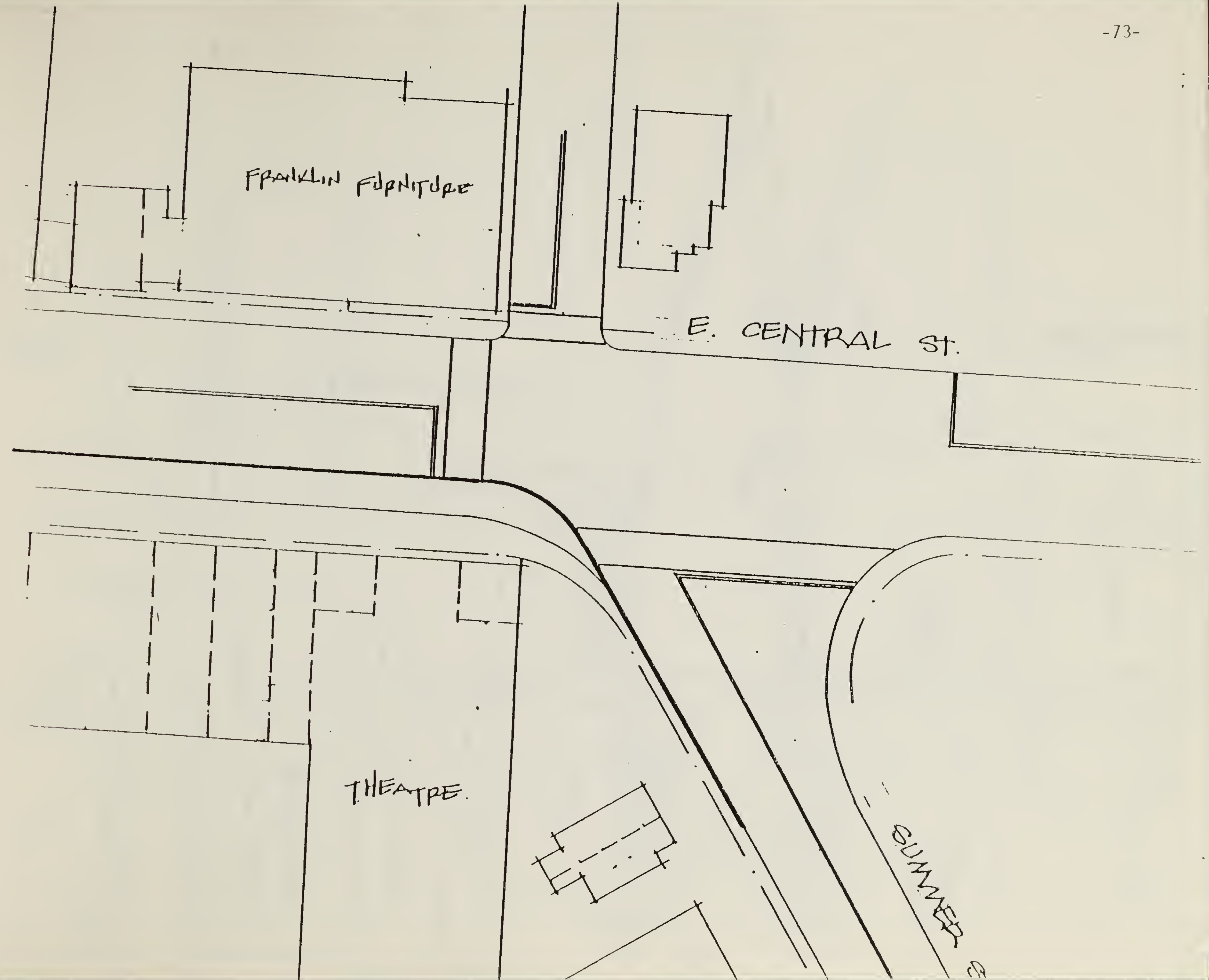
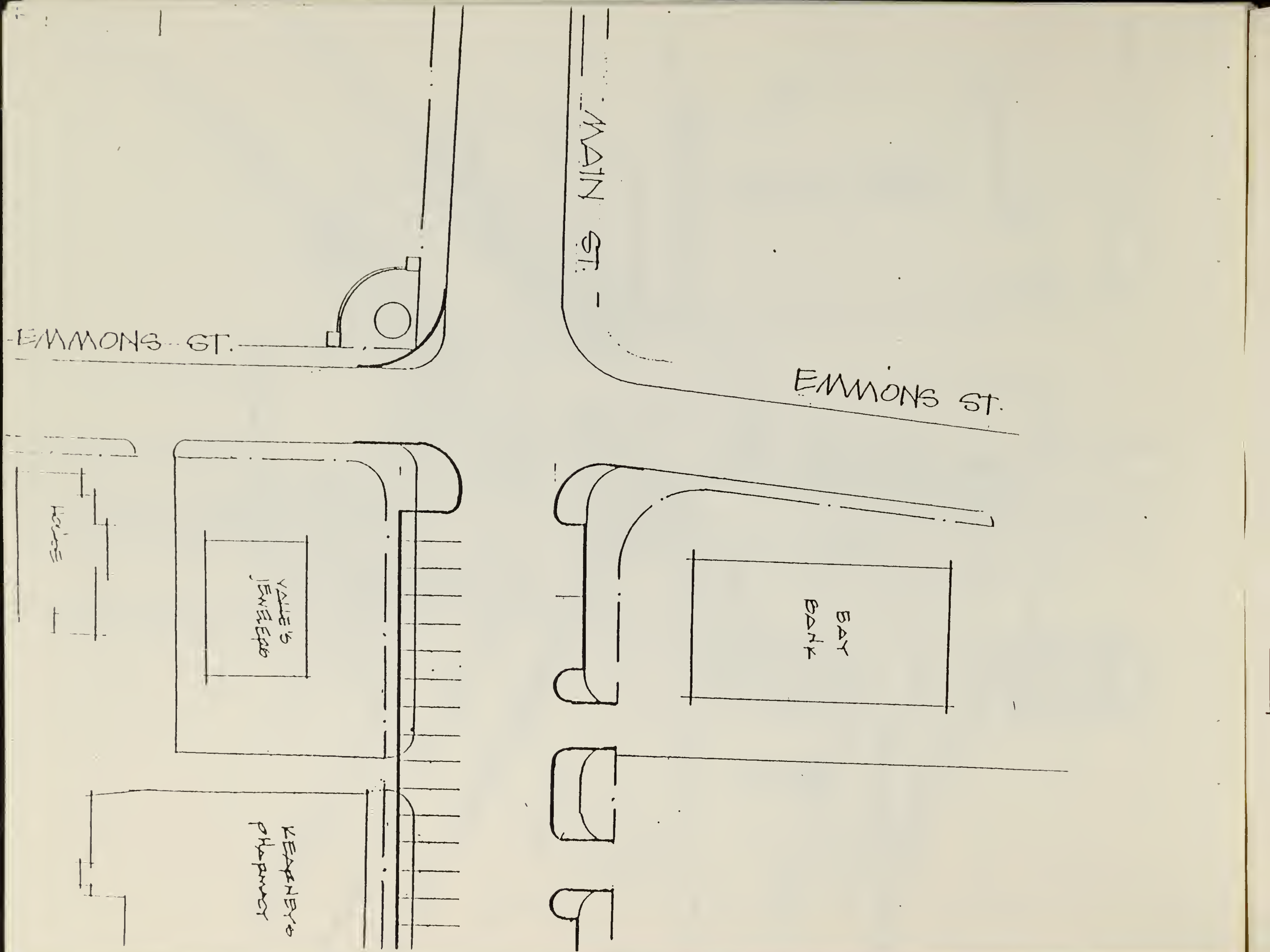
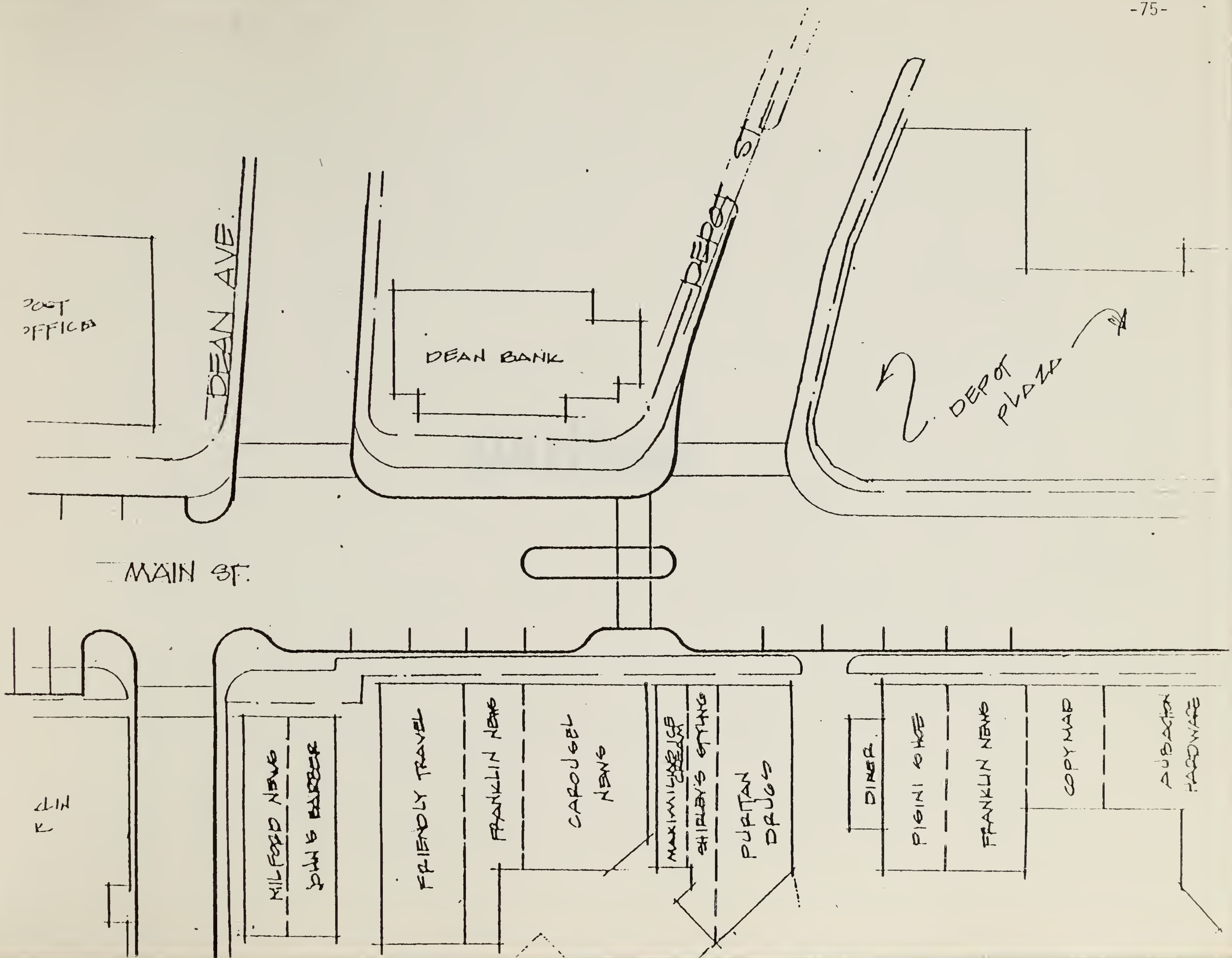

FRANKLIN FURNITURE
E. CENTRAL ST.
THEATRE
SUMMER



EMMONS ST.
MAIN ST.
EMMONS ST.
YALE'S JEWELER
BAY BANK
KEARNEY'S PHARMACY


DEAN AVE.
DEPOT ST.
DEAN BANK
2 DEPOT PLAZA
MAIN ST.
MILFORD NEWS
FRIENDLY TRAVEL
FRANKLIN NEWS
CAROUSEL NEWS
SHIRLEY'S STYLING
PURITAN DRUGS
DINER
FRANKLIN NEWS
HARDWARE

parking

PARKING ANALYSIS

The MAPC, as a part of the Franklin Center Revitalization Project, has conducted a number of parking studies to determine the adequacy of existing conditions at various locations within the community. These studies have been duration/utilization assessments at most on- and off-street locations. Separate counts and tabulations have been made for eleven separate locations including the municipal, commuter lots, Main Street, side streets, the Municipal Office Building lot, six separate areas of the central block lots, and the White Hen and Friendly's lots. These have been supplemented by a complete inventory of all available parking in the downtown and estimates of parking demand based on existing retail activity. Due to a perceived very low utilization, borne out by a very high surplus of supply over demand in the East Central Street area, that area was not counted.

For the purposes of this analysis, downtown Franklin has been divided into four separate areas (see supply and demand map for boundaries). This has been done to reflect real barriers to movement (e.g., the railroad, West Central Street) and differing usage orientations of the areas. It is for this reason that the Municipal Office Building has been considered separately from the other areas. The four areas defined are:

Area 1: The Main Street/retail oriented areas consisting of Main Street and its side streets, the central block lots, Depot Plaza, and any other small lots available. The Post Office and its lot were eliminated from both supply and demand calculations for this area for much the same reason as the Municipal Office Building.

Area 2: The shops and associated parking south of West Central Street. The parking at the Service Center, municipal facilities, etc. has not been considered in the calculations of supply and demand in this location.

Area 3: The East Central Street Area including all commercial activity and parking within the project area east of the railroad bridge.

Area 4: The municipal and commuter lots and abutting commercial establishments. This area has been isolated because of its almost exclusively commuter orientation.

Parking supply has been inventoried in each of these areas and the demand generated has been estimated for each area based on parking standards developed by the MAPC. Standards tend to vary slightly from source and even in different locations to reflect specific local conditions. The standards are based on square footage of commercial activity. The standards applied in Franklin are:

Use	Parking (spaces/1000 s.f.)
Convenience retail	3.5
Comparison retail	5.0
Furniture and appliances	1.5
Professional	4.0
Services	4.0
Bank/Office	3.5
Restaurant	7.5
Entertainment	4.0

Normally these standards are applied additively, i.e. although some overlap of parking may be expected by a person both banking and shopping, for example, the full requirement is applied to each use. This generally results in a fairly conservative (i.e. high) estimate of parking demand. Actual experienced demands are frequently lower than demand estimated from standards.

In one case, demand has not been estimated additively because of the difference in prime hours of operation between the theater and other commercial activities.

Based on the inventory, on demand estimates and on the duration/utilization studies, several summary observations may be made:

- o Both the downtown as a whole and three of the four individual areas of town have a very generous surplus of parking available.
- o Main Street has one of the lowest utilizations ever encountered in a downtown, probably because of the meters and abundance of convenient, free, off-street parking. This shunning of Main Street parking is detrimental to convenience retail trade.
- o The municipal and commuter lots are inadequate to handle commuter demand alone and are oversubscribed. What the potential demand might ultimately reach is unknown since it is constrained by the available supply. Because of the abundance of parking available in the downtown, only the immediate abutters experience any problem due to the high demand for this facility.

- Although the downtown as a whole has more than adequate parking, it is highly disorganized and/or organized in such a fashion as to limit its commercial potential. Parking lots are cut-up with only one, limited piece dedicated to commercial parking in the most prime, central location. High use of the bank lot (see individual accumulation profiles) attest to its popularity. Remote location and comparative inaccessibility, both by car and to stores limit other locations to low utilizations. This "cut-up" quality can lead to localized crowding and the perception of a "parking problem" in the midst of abundance. The one-way street system further aggravates the problem by forcing more protracted searches among the isolated lots.

Specific recommendations for parking improvements and design layout for parking areas are included in the Urban Design section of this report.

Summary of Parking Conditions

Area 1 - Main Street Shopping District:

Total Demand: 300 Total supply: on-street: 69 off-street: 297

Average utilization (9-1): on-street: 70% off-street: 62%

Peak accumulation: on-street: 81% @ 9:45 off-street: 69% @ 10:45

Projected 8 hr. turnover (veh/space): on-street: 7.4 off-street: 4.3

Average stay (min/veh): on-street: 37 off-street: 1 hr. 7 min.

Area 2 - West Central Street:

Total demand: 76 Total supply: on-street: 0 off-street: 87

Average utilization (9-1): 35% Peak Accumulation: 47% @ 11:45

Projected 8 hr. turnover (veh/space): 4.0 Average stay (min/veh): 41

Area 3 - East Central Street:

Total demand: 154 Total supply: on-street: 59 off-street: 275

Total supply: 334 Surplus: 180

Area 4 - Municipal and Commuter Lots:

Total demand (retail only): 31 Total supply: 220 (all off-street)

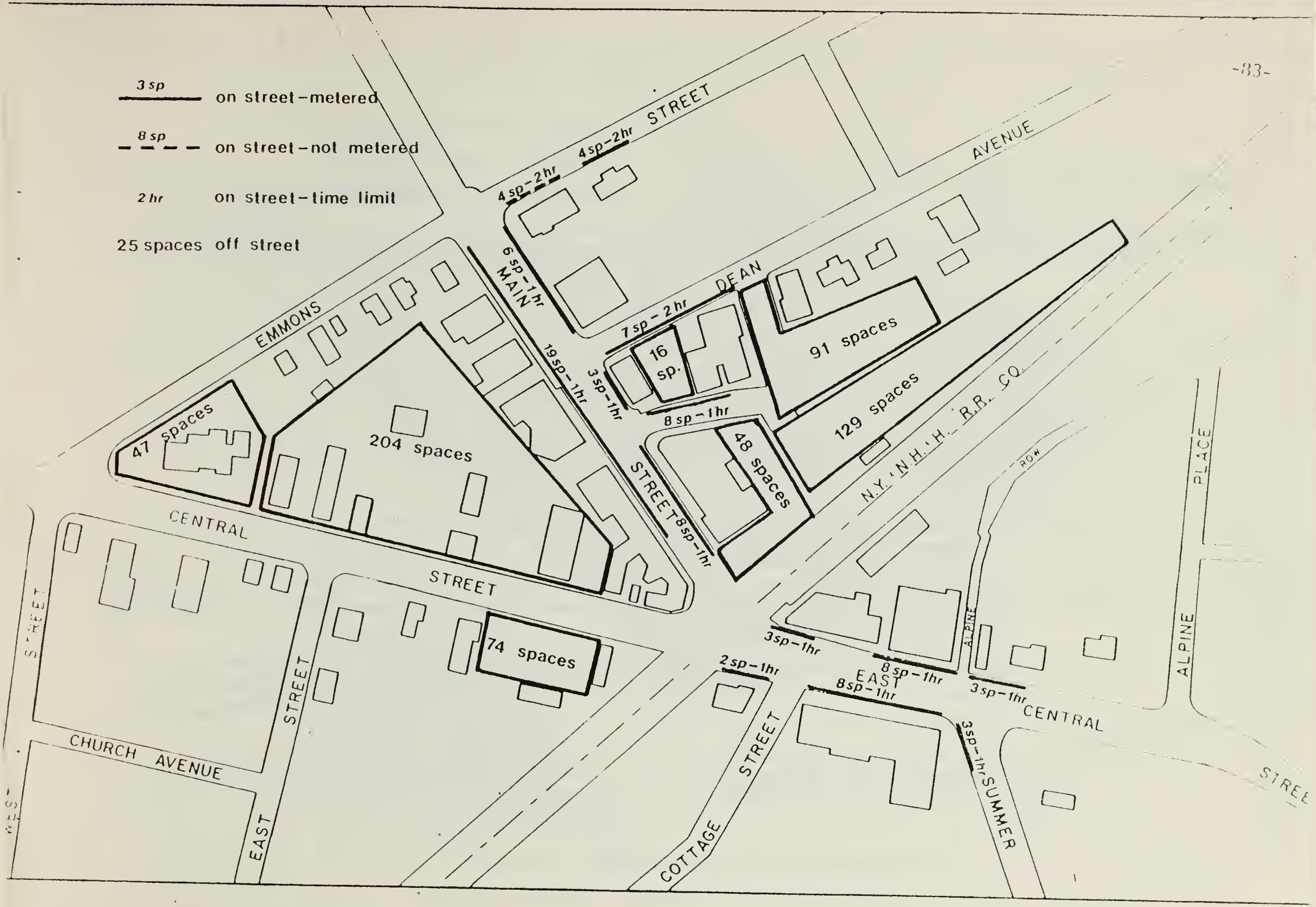
Average utilization (9-1): 100% Peak accumulation: 104% @ 12:00

Municipal Office Building Parking:

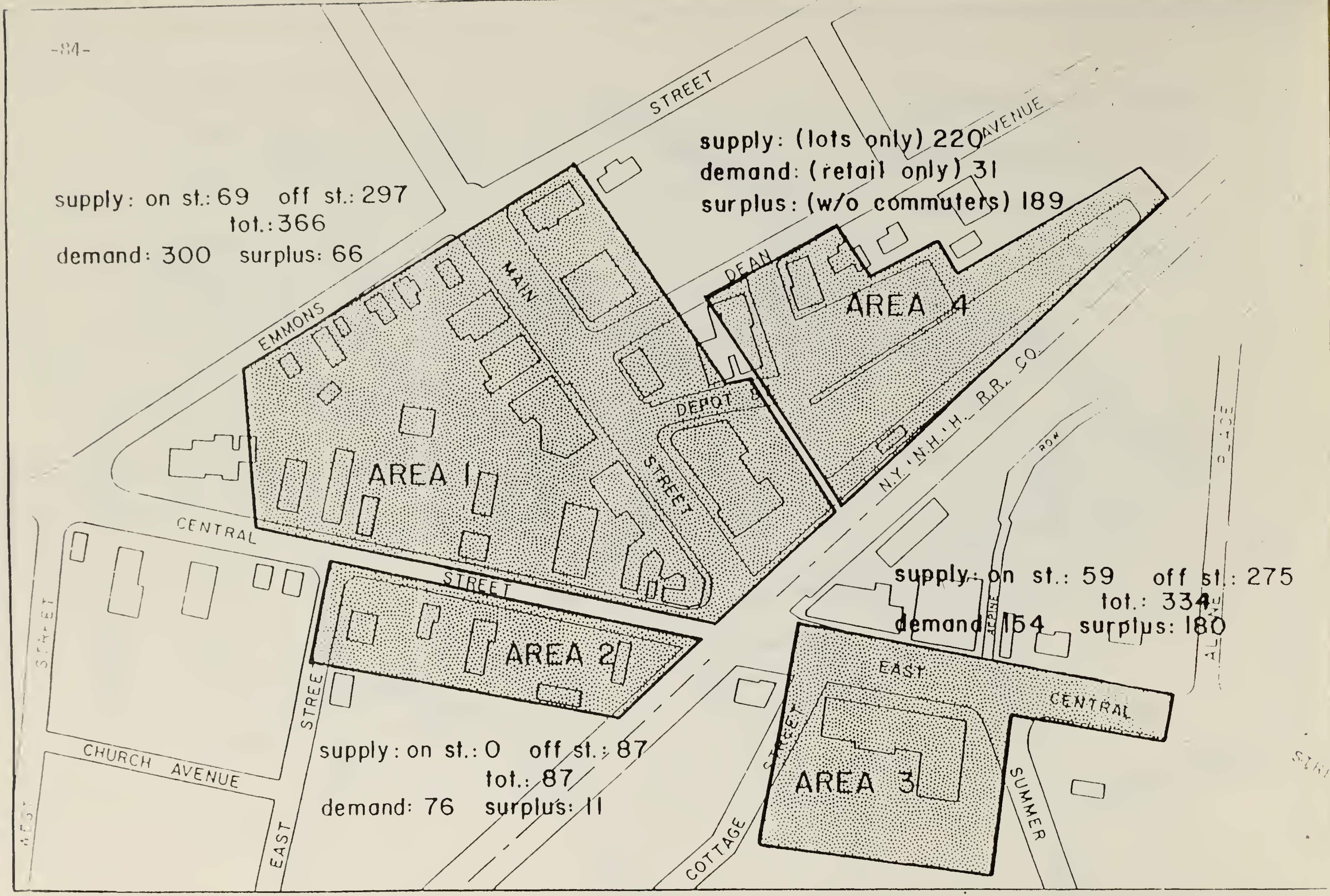
Total supply: 47

Average utilization (9-1): 38% Peak accumulation: 57% @ 10:30

Projected 8 hr. turnover (veh/space): 2.6 Average stay (min/veh): 1 hr. 9 min.



PARKING INVENTORY MAP



PARKING SUPPLY vs. DEMAND

Commuter Rail Station & Parking

The location and operation of the MBTA commuter rail station and its associated parking in the center of town have been of major concern to downtown merchants, shoppers and officials alike. The parking studies conducted by the MAPC have shown these concerns to be justified.

At present the commuter rail station--the terminal station for the Franklin branch line--is located immediately off Main Street behind the Depot Plaza. The station provides 129 marked parking spaces for commuters. The station parking is immediately adjacent to a municipal parking lot containing 91 marked spaces. The Depot Plaza parking lot also abuts the commuter facility at the top of an incline. Both the commuter lot and the municipal lot are used almost exclusively by long-term parkers, the majority of which appear to be commuters. The Depot Plaza lot appears to be substantially affected by the overflow from the commuter lot although not completely taken over. The commuter parking issue does not extend beyond the immediate area of Depot Street and the three lots mentioned, probably because of the parking meters on Main Street.

Because this is the terminal station on this branch, Franklin services a much larger area than other stations, drawing commuters from the neighboring communities and Rhode Island.

The issue of commuter parking in the Depot Street area is serious for the immediately abutting properties and businesses. It does not appear to appreciably limit parking in the remainder of the downtown.

There are two basic approaches to alleviating this problem: 1) relocate the station and, 2) expand the available parking. It is possible that both approaches will be necessary for an ultimate solution to the problem.

Two major possibilities for expanding parking at the present station location have already been explained in the design concepts memo previously distributed and will be considered the major alternative for this discussion. The question of station relocation requires some additional discussion. The major questions to be dealt with include:

1. The availability of sites and access to them for new parking development;

2. The availability of funding and potential schedule for station relocation; and

3. The desirability of station relocation and its potential sites from a community service point of view.

Since the third question leads to the establishment of criteria for potential relocation, it will be considered first.

At present, the commuter rail station serves two desirable and one detrimental function: it brings people into daily contact with the downtown (market function), it provides very convenient service to downtown populations of elderly, students and potential walk-ins (service function), and it clogs nearby parking lots (congestion). The service function is desirable and efforts should be made to maintain it. The market function is as yet indeterminate, but it is clear that the station exposes people to the downtown on a daily basis and engenders familiarity which can frequently lead to return visits for non-commuting purposes and provides a focus for promotional activities. In addition, license plate surveys have shown that 53% of the parkers in this area are Franklin residents and 77% are residents of the larger trade area -- all people who should be capturable by the local retail market. Further investigation of this effect is being prepared.

The detrimental effect of the congestion has already been discussed.

This yields two criteria for potential station relocation:

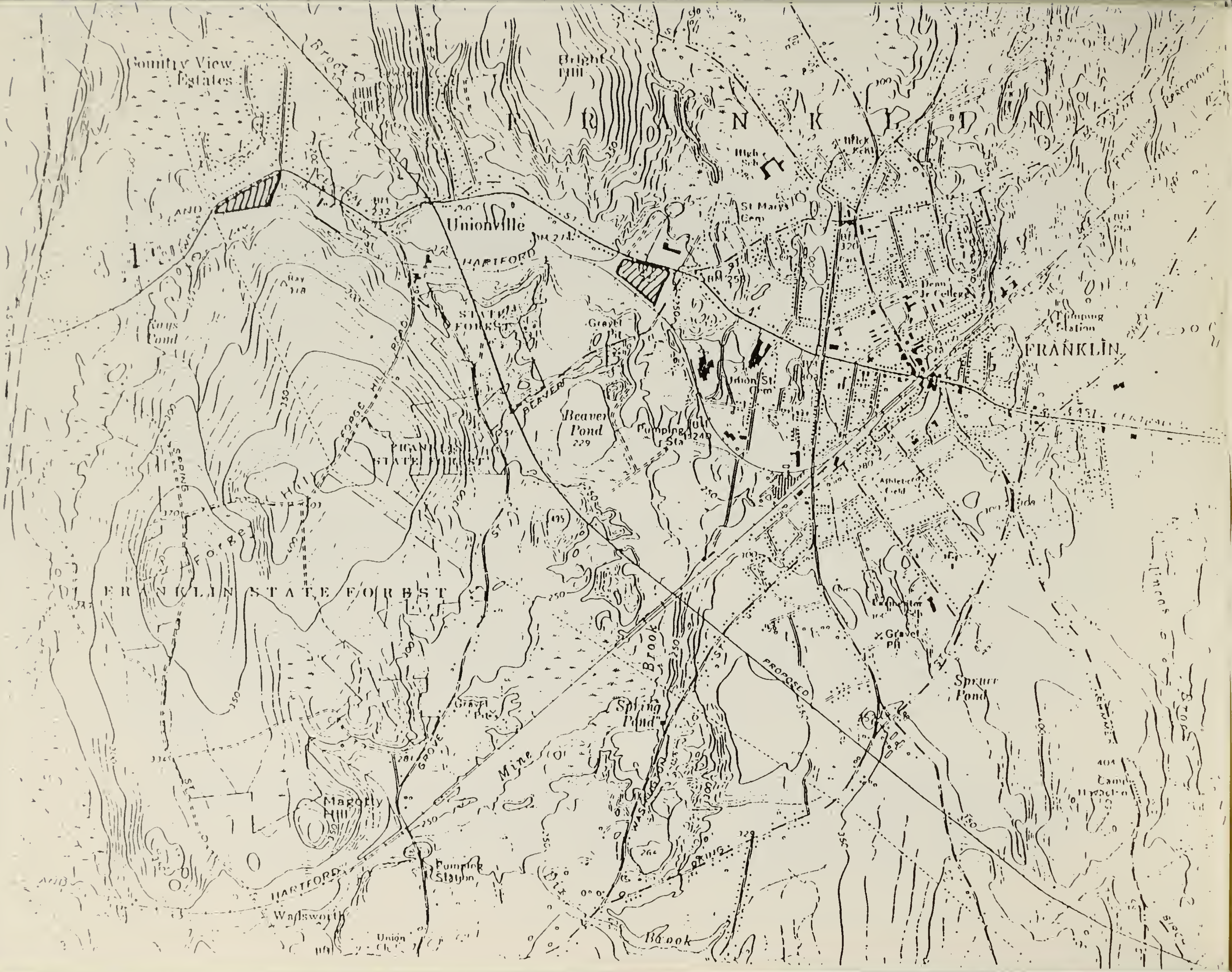
1) The present station should be retained as a service to local populations and as a potential market resource. This implies that any new station should be at least a mile, preferably more, beyond the present location.

2) The new station should provide its best service to more remote commuters and siphon off as few local residents for market purposes as possible. This implies that it should be located convenient to Route 495, preferably on the other side of 495 from the downtown.

In addition, the MBTA has suggested that any new location should provide for at least 500 potential spaces. Other standard location criteria have been applied (flat land, major road access, etc.). Based on these criteria, two potential sites have been located (see map); one at the intersection of Beaver Street and West Central, the other where West Central crosses the tracks west of I-495. The ownership status of both of these pieces is unknown at the moment. Based on criterion #2 above, the second site is preferable, but the Beaver Street Site is larger. No other sites appear to be acceptable at this time based on topography, existing development and access from I-495.

The question of the practicability of this effort remains a serious stumbling block. Conversations with MBTA staff suggest that the T is very favorable toward this type of effort -- but they have no money. They are presently operating under a strict priority distribution of funds to correct: #1 - safety problems and #2 operational problems. Extensions of sort take a back seat unless the community wishes to fund it itself. Based on existing funding circumstances, it would be 10-15 years before this type of solution could be pursued through MBTA funding.

Based on these considerations, it would appear that it is not an either/or situation, but a short and long term question. In the immediately foreseeable future, only expansion at the present site will be realistic. In the long term, however, station relocation is a possibility. The community should act to guarantee a site, however, lest all opportunity for an additional station be lost to development.



Country View Estates
Bright Hill
High Sch
St Marys Cem
Unionville
HARTFORD
STATE FOREST
Gravel Pit
Beaver Pond
229
Pumping Sta
Union St Cem
Dean Jr College
Pumping Station
FRANKLIN
Athletic Field
FRANKLIN STATE FOREST
Brook
Spring Pond
PROPOSED
Gravel Pit
Spruce Pond
Camp
Mine
Gravel Pits
Magotty Hill
Pumping Station
HARTFORD
Wadsworth
Union Ch
Brook

[illegible]

urban design

Conceptual Approaches to Franklin Center Physical Planning

In response to the problems and opportunities in downtown Franklin identified by the MAPC through field studies and surveys, and illustrated in the accompanying existing conditions and analysis plan, three conceptual approaches to physical change in downtown were developed.

In the initial phase of the project none of these concepts represented a propsal for specific action for the community. Instead, they were intended to serve as guides for community thinking and help the citizens, merchants and officials to grapple with the difficult issues they are frequently faced with when considering downtown improvements. They were designed to explore the widest possible range of alternative solutions and specific design ideas that might be applied. The alternatives considered by the committee ranged from a rather major redevelopment to a rather minor reorganization. The major features of these concepts are outlined below. A plan view of each concept is included.

Concept #1 explores major redevelopment ideas in terms of:

1) Organized central parking area with connecting pedestrian ways resulting in better relationship between parking and commercial activity, and a less confusing traffic circulation pattern.

2) Removal and relocation of several buildings and residences in poor condition to provide for better organization of a parking center and retail district.

3) New commercial development along West Central Street (North and South).

4) Widen West Central Street and change to two-way thru traffic (Rt. 140) providing opportunity to make North Main Street a pedestrian oriented area with sitting spaces, landscape amenities, etc.

5) Extension of existing commuter parking lot and/or removal of warehouse to provide additional commuter parking with a pedestrian bridge crosswalk to train station-concept 1a.

Concept #2 addresses the redevelopment issues on a smaller scale and explores several other concepts for improvements including:

1) Leave bank drive-thru-tellers, Cronin's building and Benny Oil where they are presently located.

2) Relocate the fireplace shop to Central Street as shown and explore another layout of parking center for shoppers and employees.

3) Redevelopment of Emmons Street to accommodate parking and open space.

4) New development along Central as shown with the possibility of expanding White Hen Pantry and Shaw's Meat complex with more food and grocery establishments, creating a marketplace atmosphere.

5) Provide sitting spaces and activity areas behind Main Street stores with pedestrian links from Main Street to Central Street.

6) Create an entry area at the corner of Main Street and Central Street, reworking the intersection geometry and controlling traffic.

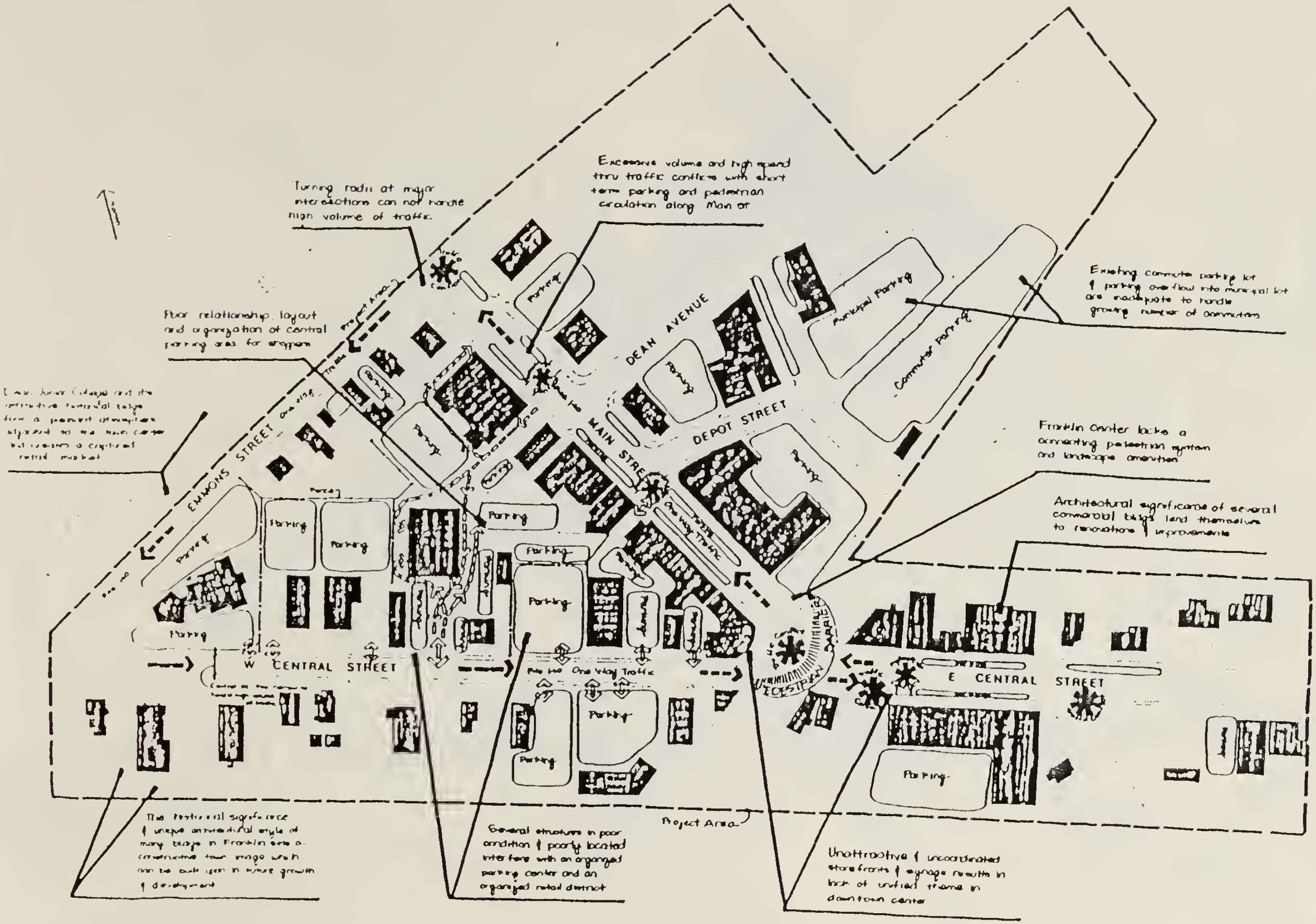
7) Widen Central Street making 2-way thru traffic with vehicular access onto South Main Street and Depot Street for commuters. Create a pedestrian and parking oriented area on North Main Street with vehicular traffic limited for short term parking only.

Concept #3 is the simplest solution to the problem of central parking organization with no relocation of existing buildings or no vehicular traffic changes.

Concepts 1, 2, and 3 explore many different ideas individually. Overall concepts are storefront and signage coordination and general streetscape and landscape improvements which would enhance the character of Franklin and tie the downtown together.

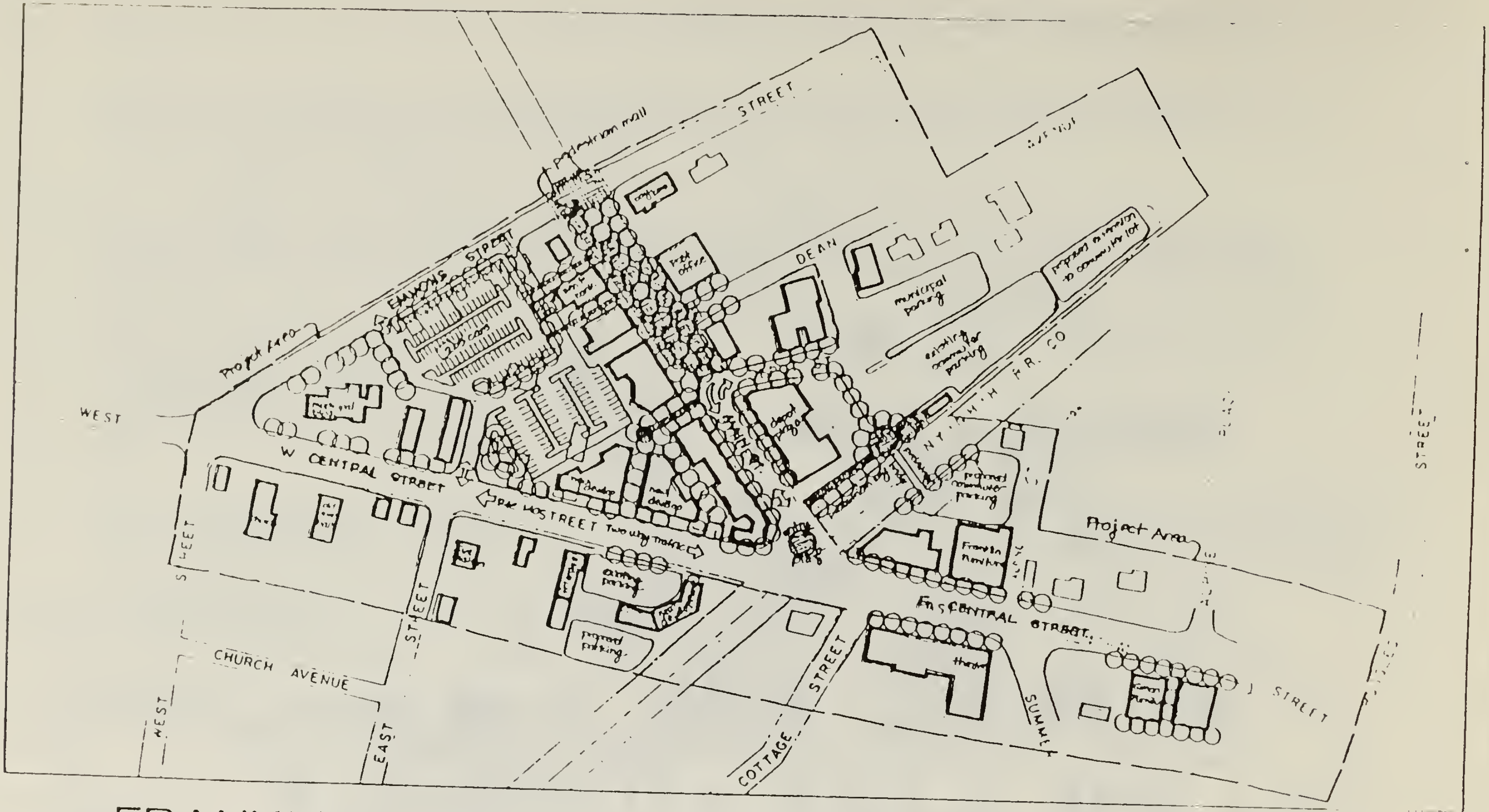
Franklin Center Preliminary Downtown Improvement Plan

Committee response to the broad range of approaches to solving Franklin Center's major problems cultivated a preliminary downtown improvement plan in two phases. Phase 1 being the implementation of the high priority items and Phase 2 future development and improvements to downtown Franklin. Combining the favorable and realistic aspects of those concepts, an overall plan for Franklin Center included the following design solutions.



FRANKLIN CENTER

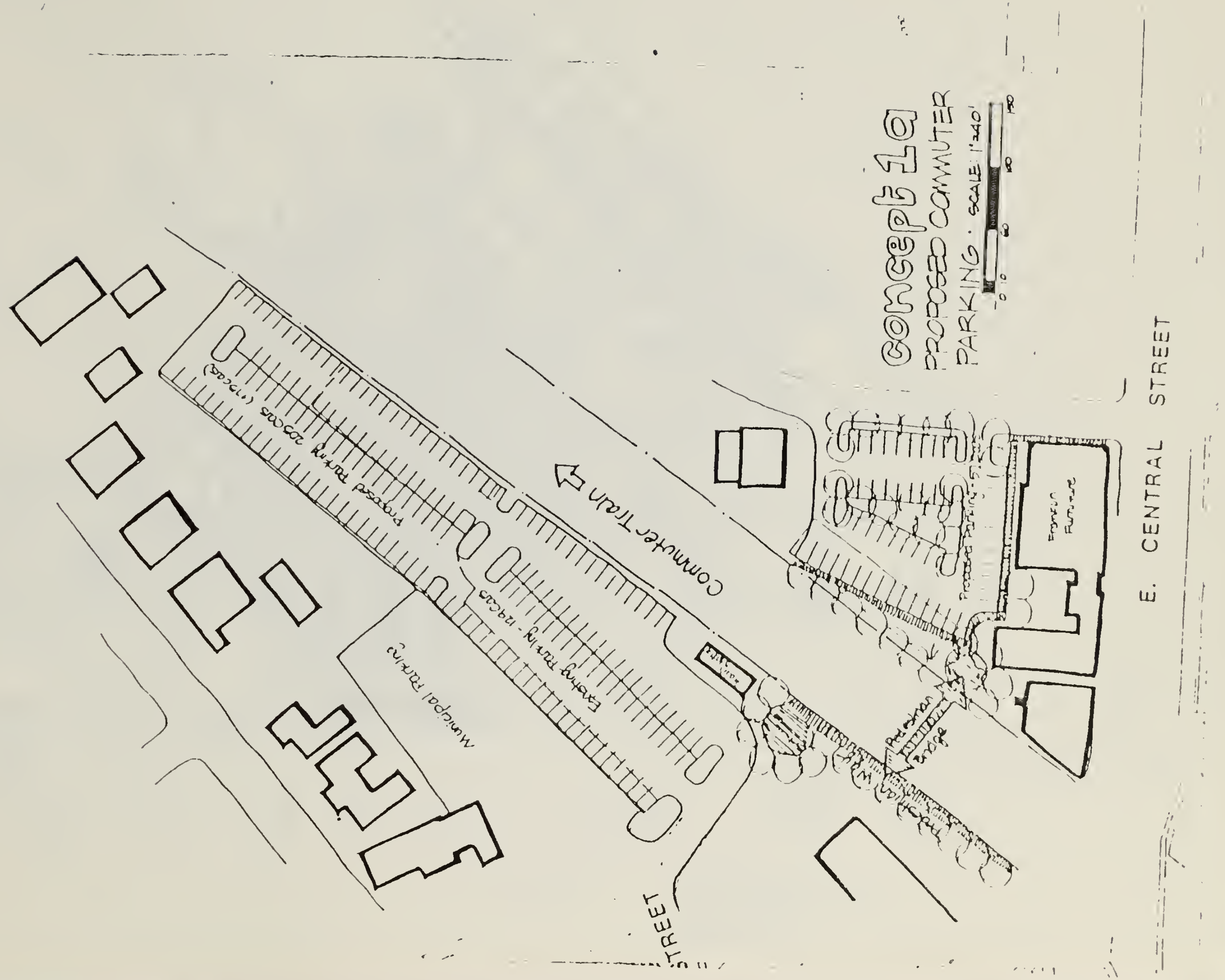
EXISTING CONDITIONS & SITE ANALYSIS



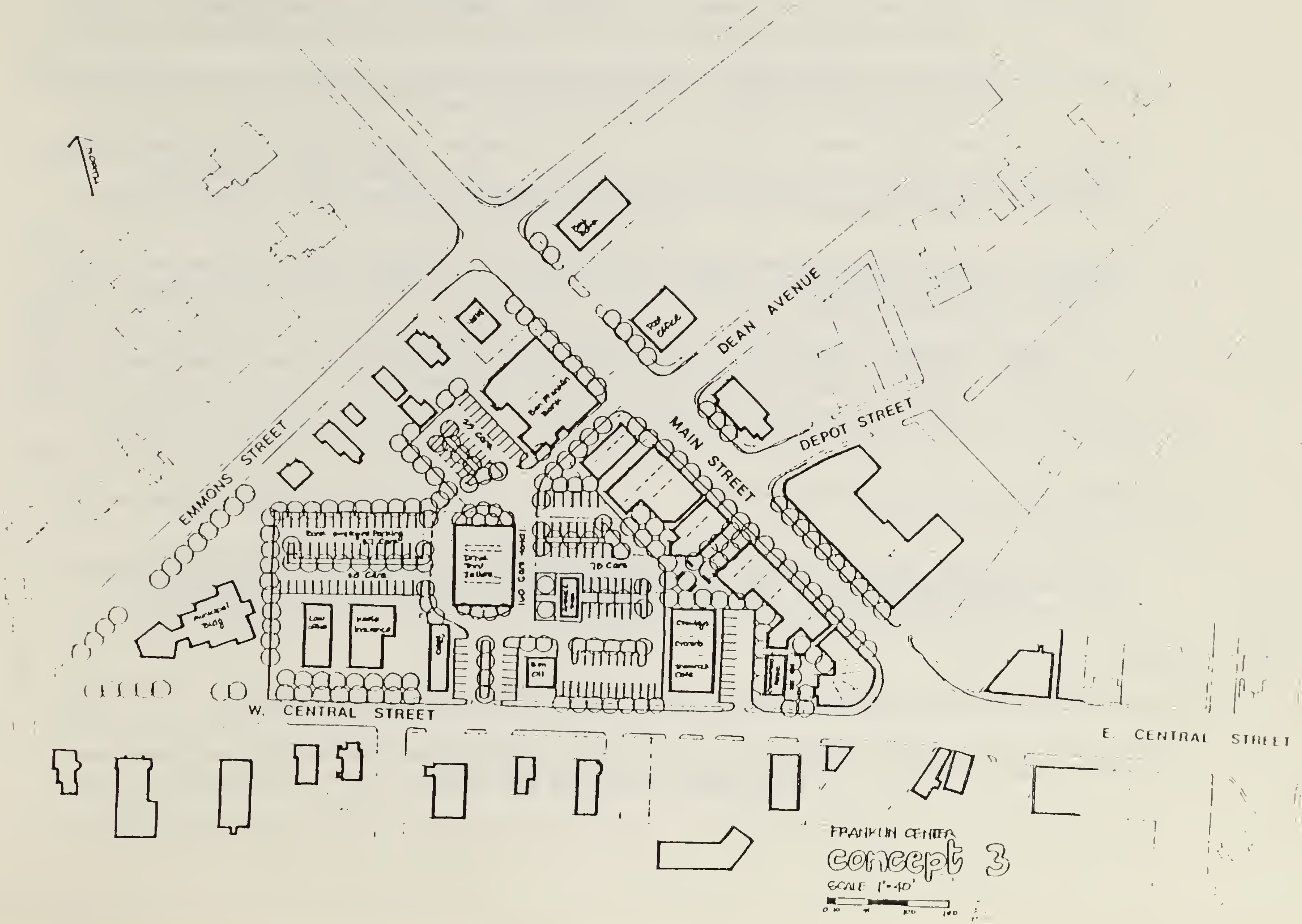
FRANKLIN CENTER REVITALIZATION PROJECT

concept 1

SCALE 1" = 100'


Concept 1a
PROPOSED COMMUTER
PARKING · SCALE 1"=240'
E. CENTRAL STREET
STREET
Commuter Train
Existing Parking - 129 cars
Municipal Parking

EMMONS STREET
DEAN AVENUE
DEPOT STREET
W. CENTRAL STREET
Widen - Two Way Traffic
E. CENTRAL STREET
Two Way Traffic
FRANKLIN CENTER
concept 2
SCALE 1"=40'


NORTH
EMMONS STREET
DEAN AVENUE
MAIN STREET
DEPOT STREET
Post Office
70 Cars
W. CENTRAL STREET
E. CENTRAL STREET
FRANKLIN CENTER
concept 3
SCALE 1"=40'

Phase 1

1. Organized central parking area behind Main Street establishments resulting in better relationship between parking and commercial activity. Improved access and layout of central spaces creates a less confusing traffic circulation pattern for the off street parking core.

2. Widen West Central Street and change to two way through traffic (Rt. 140) providing opportunity for increased short term pull in parking on Main Street between Depot and Emmons Street.

   South Main Street would remain the traffic route for commuter access with a landscaped island providing a transition for local parking area traffic. With a redesigned and possibly signalized intersection at Main Street and Central Street and other traffic changes being studied, Main Street becomes a safer street for pedestrians and vehicles.

3. Extension of existing commuter parking lot to accommodate an additional 75 cars and relocation of Franklin Furniture to provide commuter parking (84 spaces) with a pedestrian bridge crosswalk to the train station.

4. Streetscape improvements along Main St. and Central St. tieing the two areas of downtown together with street trees, victorian streetlights, and benches.

5. Pedestrian linkage between central parking and Main St. commercial district and designated crosswalks at major points along Main and Central St.

6. Create sitting areas with trees, benches and lighting providing an opportunity for people to enjoy downtown Franklin.

7. Storefront and signage improvements developing an attractive commercial district for shoppers, pedestrians and "passers-by". This could be accomplished through design recommendations, signage guidelines and coordination among merchants.

Phase 2

1. Expansion of parking adjacent to Ben Franklin Bank with an additional 27 spaces.

2. New Development along W. Central St. relocating the existing Cable TV building and Cumberland Farms to make room for new establishments and gathering spaces.

3. Expansion and addition of food and grocery establishments connected to White Hen Pantry and Shaw's Meat, creating a market place atmosphere.

4. Acquire the Masconic Hall. Develop the site for 51 additional parking spaces.

5. Redesign parking and develop open space area adjacent to the Municipal Building. Providing lawn area and picnic tables. Plant trees and shrubs to soften building facade.

Revised Downtown Improvement Plan

Following approval of the Downtown Improvement Plan by the Center Revitalization Committee reaction by the community was both positive and negative.

While the plan did enjoy support by several property owners, two property owners affected by the plan were unwilling to participate in a central parking area. Also, one property owner was unenthusiastic about the concept of developing a pedestrian mall area adjacent to his property. These changes make it necessary for the committee to step in and rethink some of the plan's solutions and determine exactly how those new developments were to affect the plan. After discussing the new alternatives with the committee a modified improvement plan was developed incorporating the suggestions in order to procure full community support.

Additions and Alternative Recommendations -

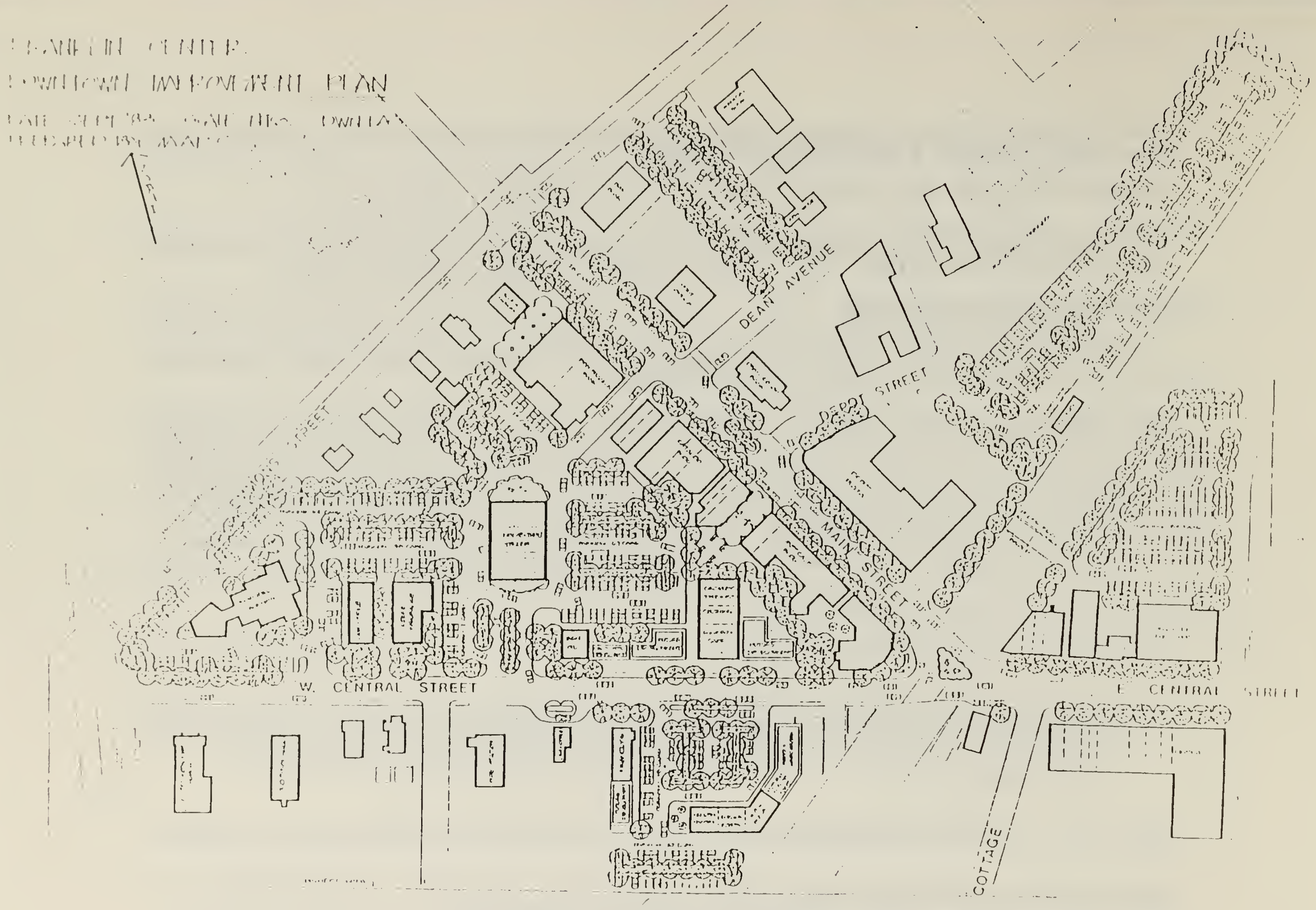
1. Revise central parking area as follows:

   - o increase parking behind Cataldo building to 85 spaces,
   - o obtain property and develop 75 space parking area along Emmons Street as shown on the revised plan. Connect to central parking area, Town Hall site and Main Street,
   - o central parking area not to include Keefe Insurance, Law Offices and Cable TV establishments.

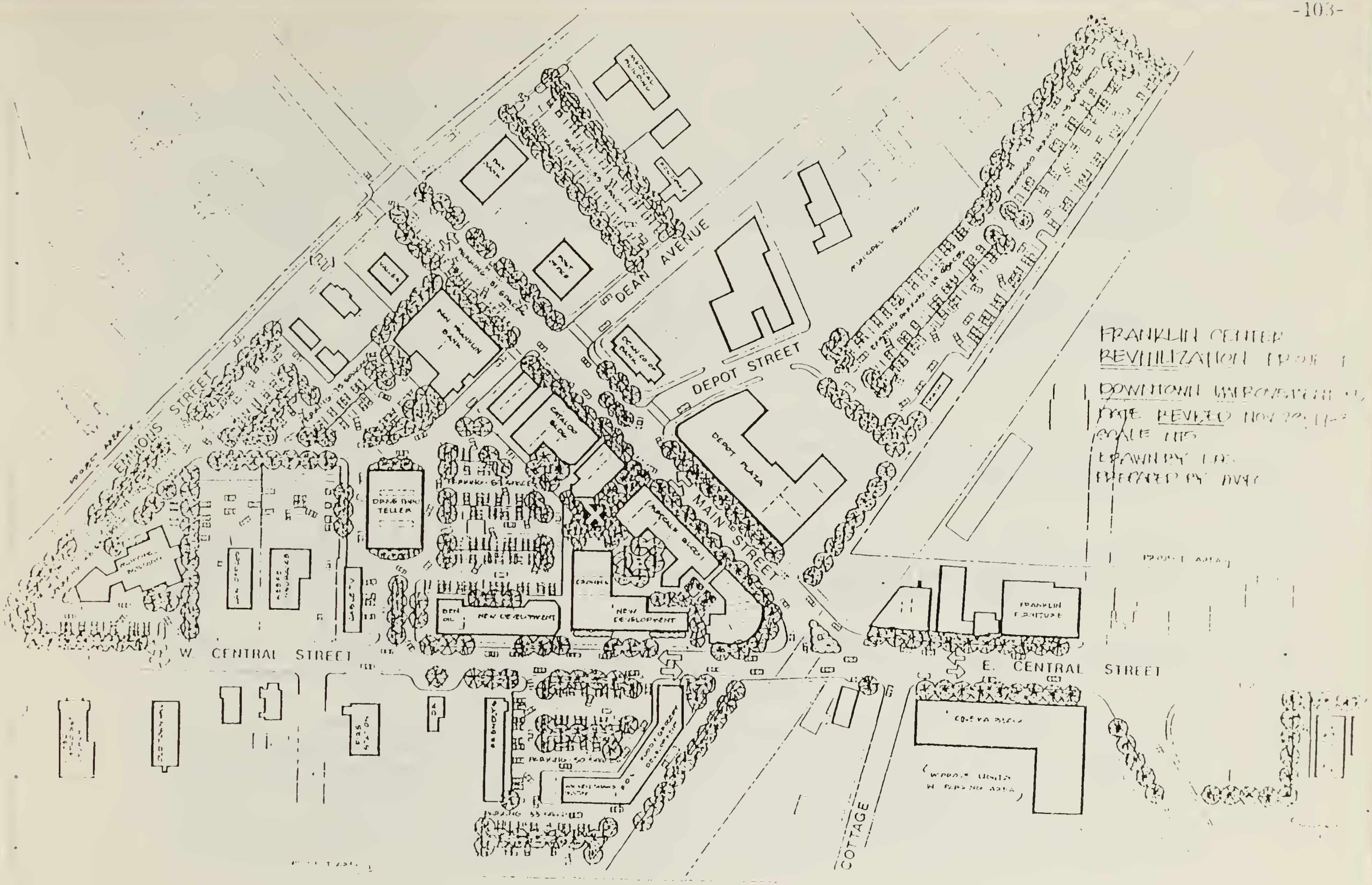
2. West Central street development and pedestrian mall behind Metcalf building as an optional plan.

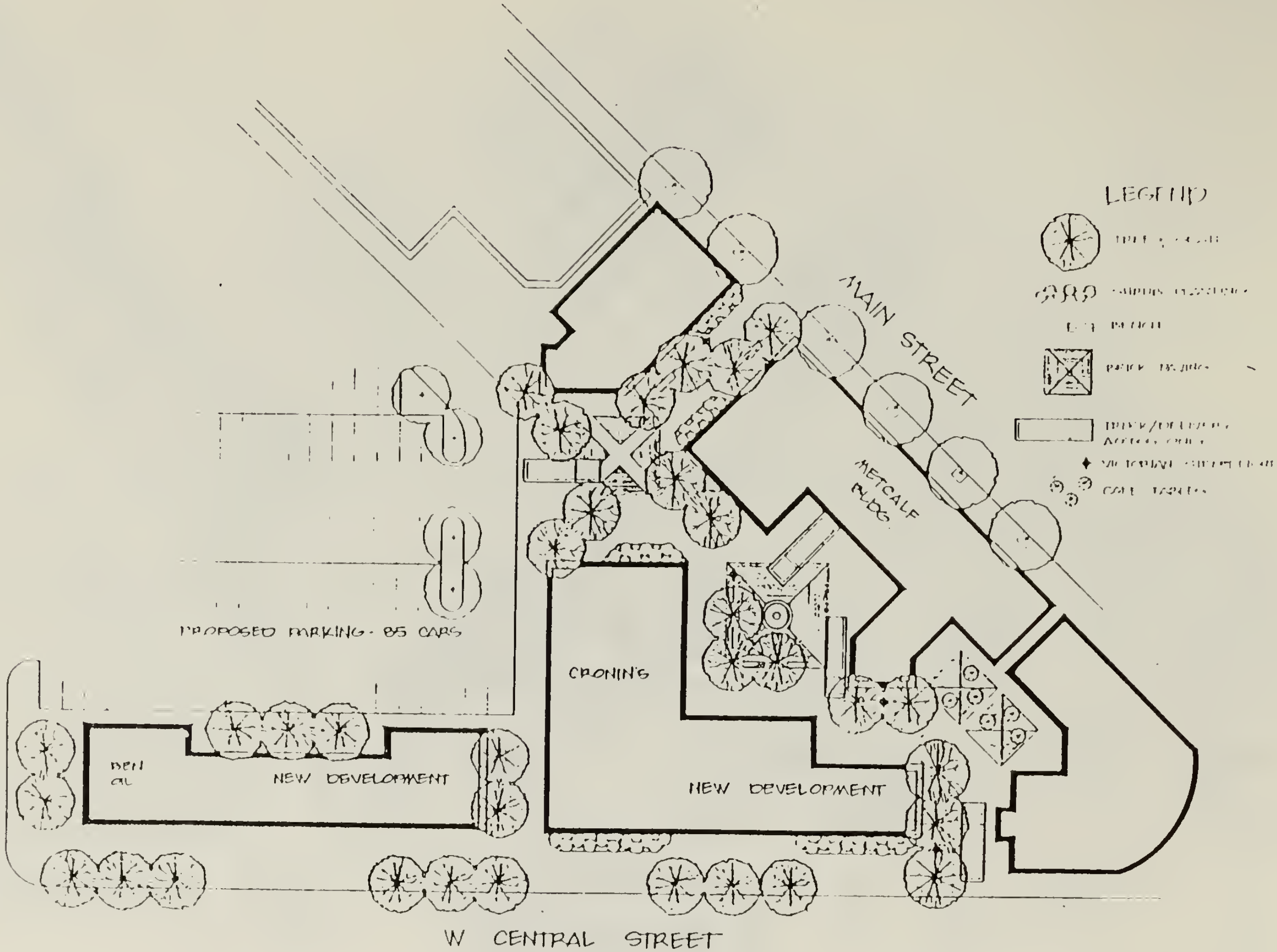
3. Increase parking and further develop food and grocery establishments south of West Central Street (including Shaw's Meats, White Hen Pantry and Friendlies).

4. Exclude commuter parking area and pedestrian bridge at Franklin Furniture Warehouse site.



PLAN
DEAN AVENUE
DEPOT STREET
MAIN STREET
W. CENTRAL STREET
E. CENTRAL STREET
COTTAGE


FRANKLIN CENTER
REVITALIZATION
DOWNTOWN
DEAN AVENUE
DEPOT STREET
MAIN STREET
EMMONS STREET
W. CENTRAL STREET
E. CENTRAL STREET
COTTAGE
DEPOT PLAZA
DRIVE THRU TELLER
NEW DEVELOPMENT
FRANKLIN FURNITURE



FRANKLIN CENTER

PEDESTRIAN MALL & W CENTRAL ST DEVELOPMENT

Design Improvements Based on Victorian Theme

Franklin has maintained a charater which translates into a valuable resource for revitalizing the quality of downtown Franklin. This Victorian character is evident throughout town. Features such as Dean Junior College, attractive churches and an old town hall, a town common surrounded by period architecture and significant downtown commercial buildings all make Franklin a potential victorian showplace.

Intigration of a victorian theme in storefront and signage improvements and streetscape improvements could enhance Franklin's character and increase the aesthetic and economic value of Franklin as well. Below are a few specific improvements for Franklin to consider along with sketches of proposed design suggestions.

Storefront and Signage Improvements -

1. Franklin Furniture building needs minor repairs and improvements including: painting, new awnings, remove shades in second floor windows and improve and upgrade displays in storefront windows; all repairs to exterior should be done without disturbing the architectural style. (See sketch)

2. Cataldo Building - Also needs minor repairs and improvements to exterior including: painting, clean and paint detailed woodwork at doorways and cornice, upgrade store window displays and store entrances, coordinate signage. (See sketch)

3. Metcalf Building - Demolish diner structure along side of building, repair cornice, coordinate signage and storefront display area. Develop pedestrian way to central parking as illustrated in sketch.

4. Depot Plaza - Redesign entire facade including: enlarge entrance to building making it easier to locate, and place colored banners on either side of the main entrance. Include a directory adjacent to the entrance, listing stores within the mall. Increase window space to make each shop's display more visible. Awnings over the window would give a pleasant scale to the building. These exterior changes along with re-organization of the interior space will provide a much more attractive and marketable space. New development along West Central Street should strongly relate to existing architecture in scale, materials, color, etc. (See sketch)

5. Attention should be given to the design of individual signs in Franklin and coordination of signs throughout town. Well designed, maintained signs would greatly improve the look of the center. Consideration should be given to number, size and placement of each sign. Sign-design guidelines for the zoning bylaws have been reviewed and are included in the zoning section of this report. Non-conforming signs should be given a deadline for changing.

Streetscape Improvements

1. Introduce Victorian style street furniture throughout the downtown area, specifically along Main Street and Central Street tieing these two areas of town together, providing a sense of unity in the downtown. See sketch of victorian style street furniture.

2. Restore a victorian atmosphere in Franklin Center by introducing large shade trees along streets and parking areas and pedestrian ways. Tree species are available which withstand urban conditions. See letter to the Franklin Beautification Committee for plant suggestions.

METROPOLITAN AREA
PLANNING COUNCIL
110 TREMONT ST
BOSTON, MA 02108
Tel (617) 451-2770

April 11, 1983

Franklin Beautification Committee
Attn: Joyce Green, Chairman
Town Hall
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038

Dear Joyce:

As a service to the Beautification Committee, enclosed are design plans for Main Street with tree and streetlight locations. At this stage in the overall center revitilization plan we are developing ideas and concepts for downtown Franklin and offer these preliminary recommendations for your review and use in the planning process.

Indicated on the plan are existing curb lines and utilities on the base survey with proposed curb lines and landscaping in heavy lines. We are recommending widening of sidewalks to 10' where possible in order to accomodate for 5' tree grates and 5' walkways in front of buildings.

Studies for the downtown area indicate conflicts and problems with the existing traffic system and recommendations for improvements include a proposed two way trhough route along W. Central Street, developing Main Street as a two way system for local traffic only. This provides the opportunity to create a pedestrian oriented Main Street. As shown on the plan, South Main Street from Central to Depot Street remains the link for commuter traffic and North Main Street between Depot and Emmons Street would become parking for shoppers with sitting areas and landscaping predominating and a landscaped island north of Depot Street as the point of transition for through traffic.

With this traffic concept in mind, the drawings show locations for trees and streetlights with the necessary adjustments along Main Street. Indicated in color on the plan are trees and lights to be installed without major changes to curblines. As shown, 10 trees and 7 lights could be located on either side of Main Street between Dean Avenue and Emmons Street in front of Bay Bank, the Post Office, Ben Franklin Bank and Valle's Jewelry under Phase I.

Included with the landscape plan is a price list and source for trees, tree grates, tree guards and victorian streetlights to give an idea of the extent of the project in terms of cost. The list of trees includes recommended species for sidewalk locations and traffic conditions.

Along with the plans and price list are copies of sketches for your committee to use in proceeding with implementation of landscaping along Main Street

Feel free to contact me for further assistance if necessary. I hope this information will help in our combined effort to make downtown Franklin a pleasant experience.

Sincerely,

Laura Stambaugh
Urban Designer

LS/kh
Enclosure

Franklin Center
Main Street Landscaping Price List & Sources
4 11 '83

Trees (Deciduous Shade)

Type	Size	Unit Price	Shipped & Installed
Tilia Cordata Littleleaf Linden	2½-3" caliper	$165.00	$330.00
Gleditsia Triacanthos Inermis Thornless Honeylocust	2½-3" caliper	$165.00	$330.00
Ginkgo Biloba Maidenhair tree	2½-3" caliper	$195.00	$390.00
Sophora Japonica Japanese Pagoda tree	2½-3" caliper	$195.00	$390.00

SOURCE: Weston Nurseries
Hopkinton, MA

Tree Grate

Grate - $200.00 each
Frame - $140.00 each
Shipping - $ 50.00 each

Total - $390.00 each

SOURCE: Neenah Foundry Company

Tree Guard - $100.00 each

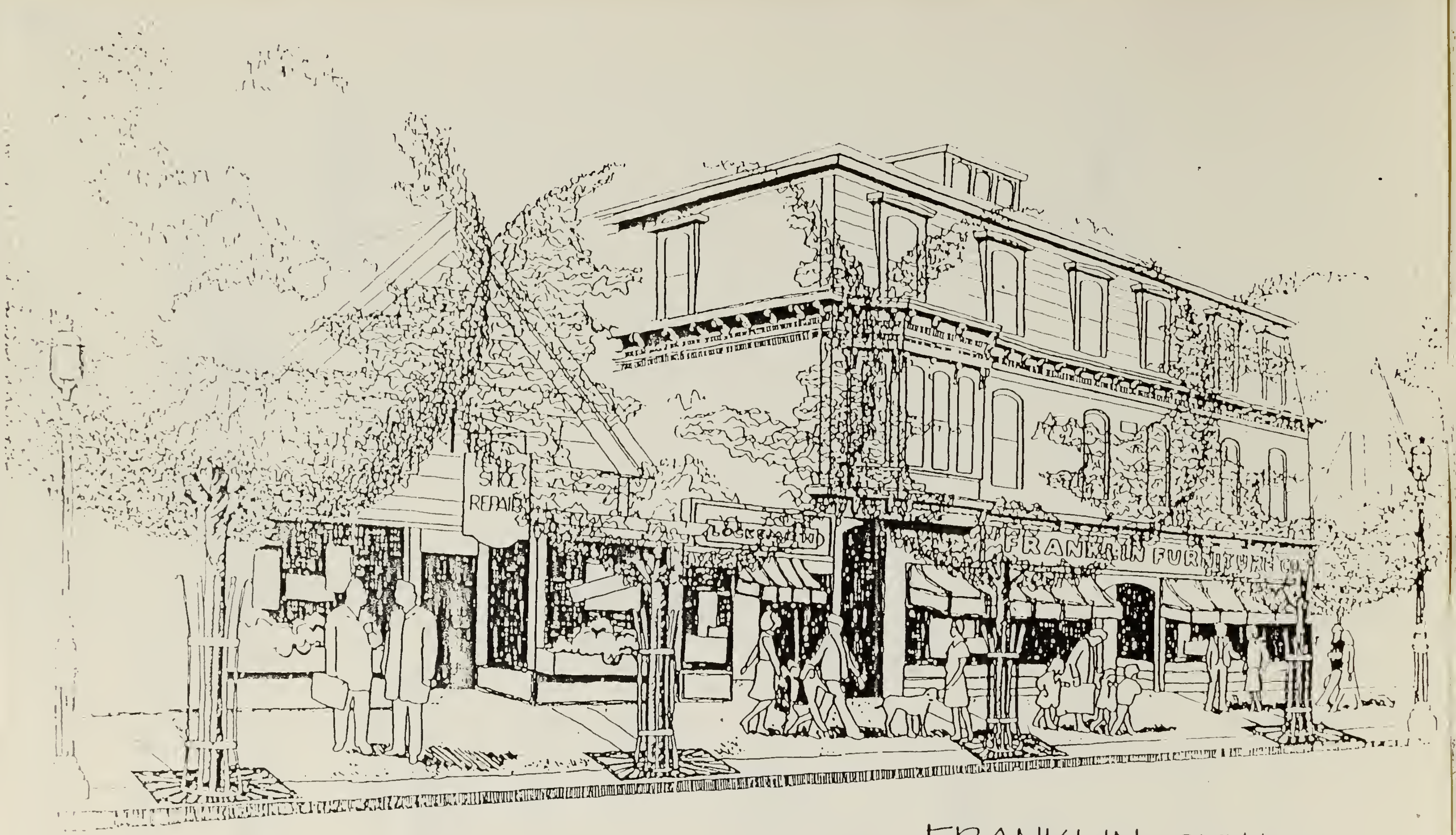
SOURCE: Neenah Foundary Company

Total price for 1 shade tree + tree grate + tree guard = $820.00 (not including installation for tree grate)

Victorian Street Light - Post and Luminaire - $1,700.00
Installation - $1,800.00

Total - $3,500.00 each

SOURCE: Welsbach Lighting Company



FRANKLIN CENTER

E. CENTRAL ST. SKETCH

2/7/83

FRANKLIN CENTER

MAIN STREET SKETCH

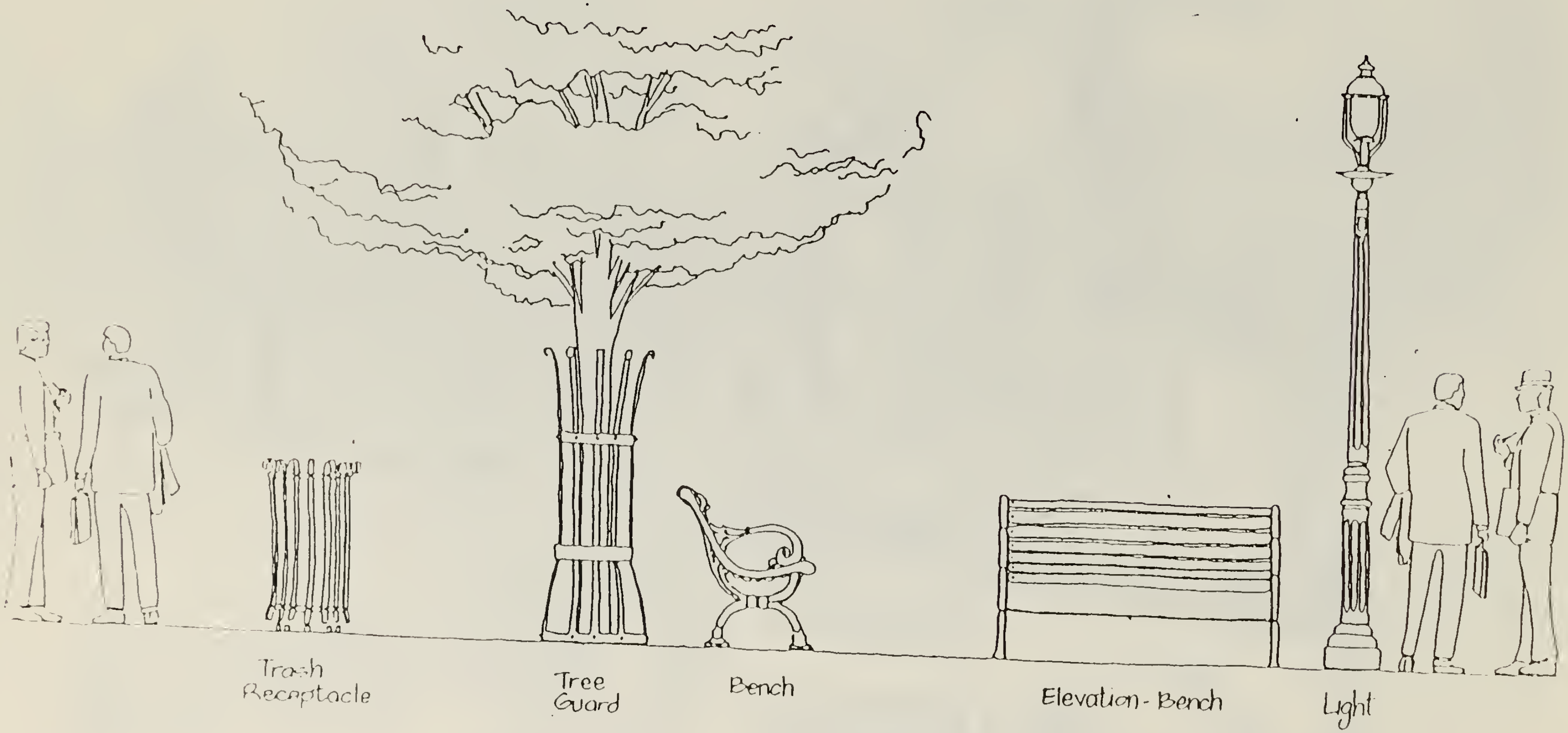
2/7/83

11.

FRANKLIN CENTER

DEPOT PLAZA SKETCH

3/3/83



FRANKLIN CENTER

Victorian Style Street Furniture
By: MAPC.
Date: March, 1983
Scale: NTS
Drawn: LAS.

Phasing Plans

The downtown improvement plan contains numerous recommendations for town center improvements. In order for the town to begin to implement a projet of this magnitude, the following phasing plans have been developed describing physical improvements. Current funding sources area listed in the appendix along with a cost estimate for physical improvements.

Franklin Center Revitilization

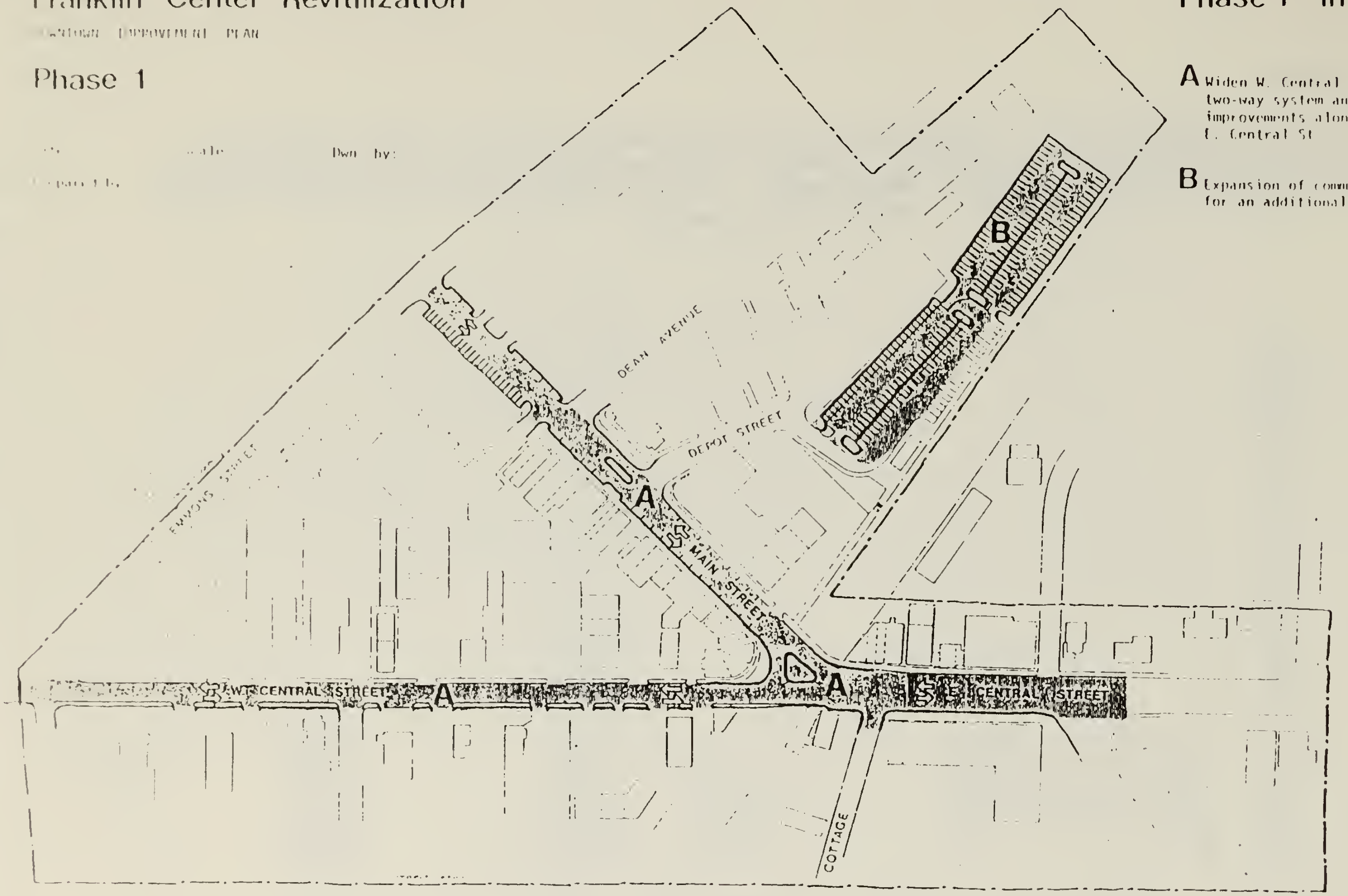
DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Phase 1

Phase 1 Improvements

A Widen W. Central St. and change to two-way system and other traffic improvements along Main St. and E. Central St.

B Expansion of commuter parking lot for an additional 25 spaces



Franklin Center Revitilization

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Phase 2

Date: Scale: Dwn. by:

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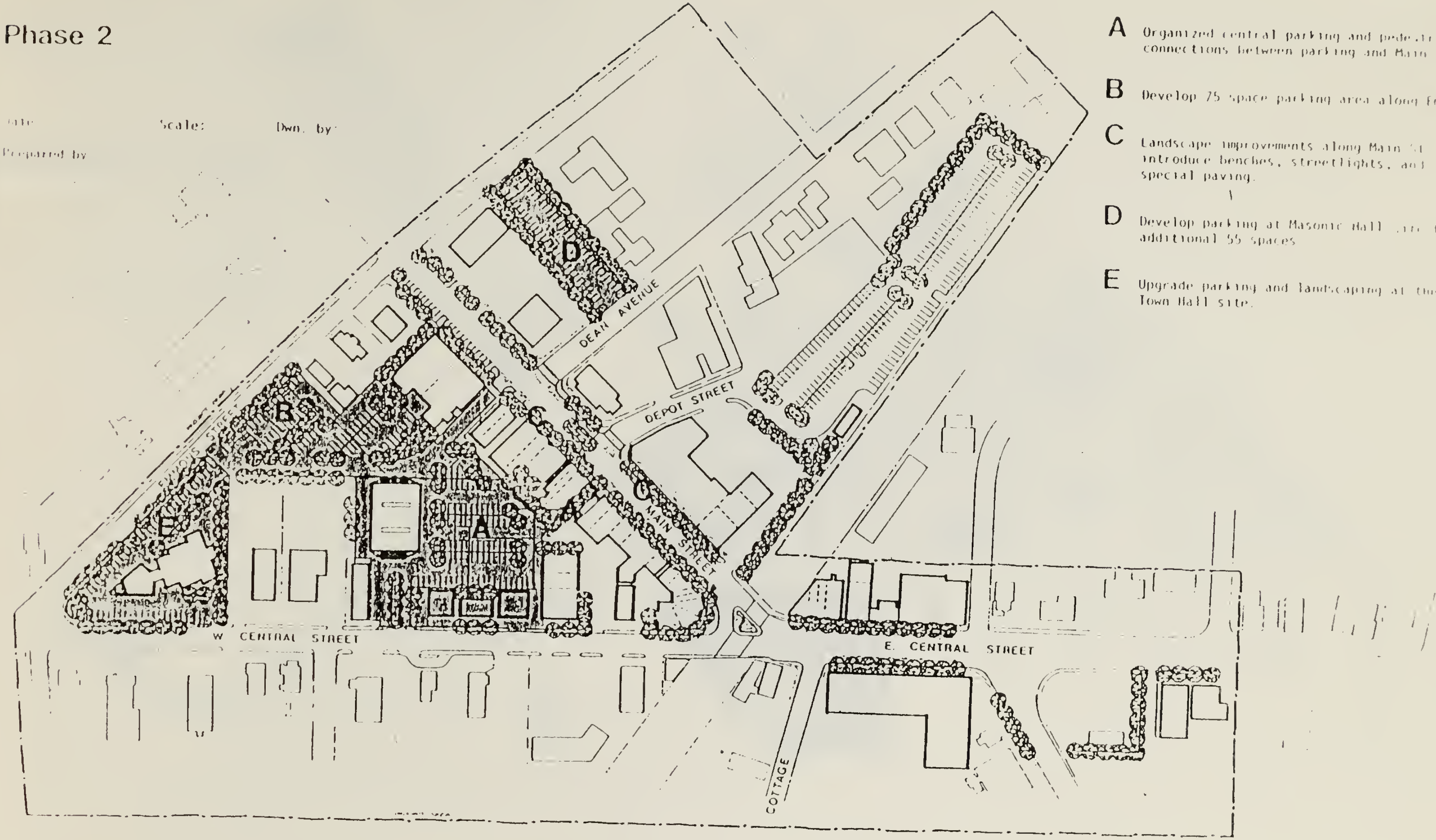


Phase 2 Improvements

A Organized central parking and pedestrian connections between parking and Main St.

B Develop 75 space parking area along ...

C Landscape improvements along Main St. to introduce benches, streetlights, and special paving.

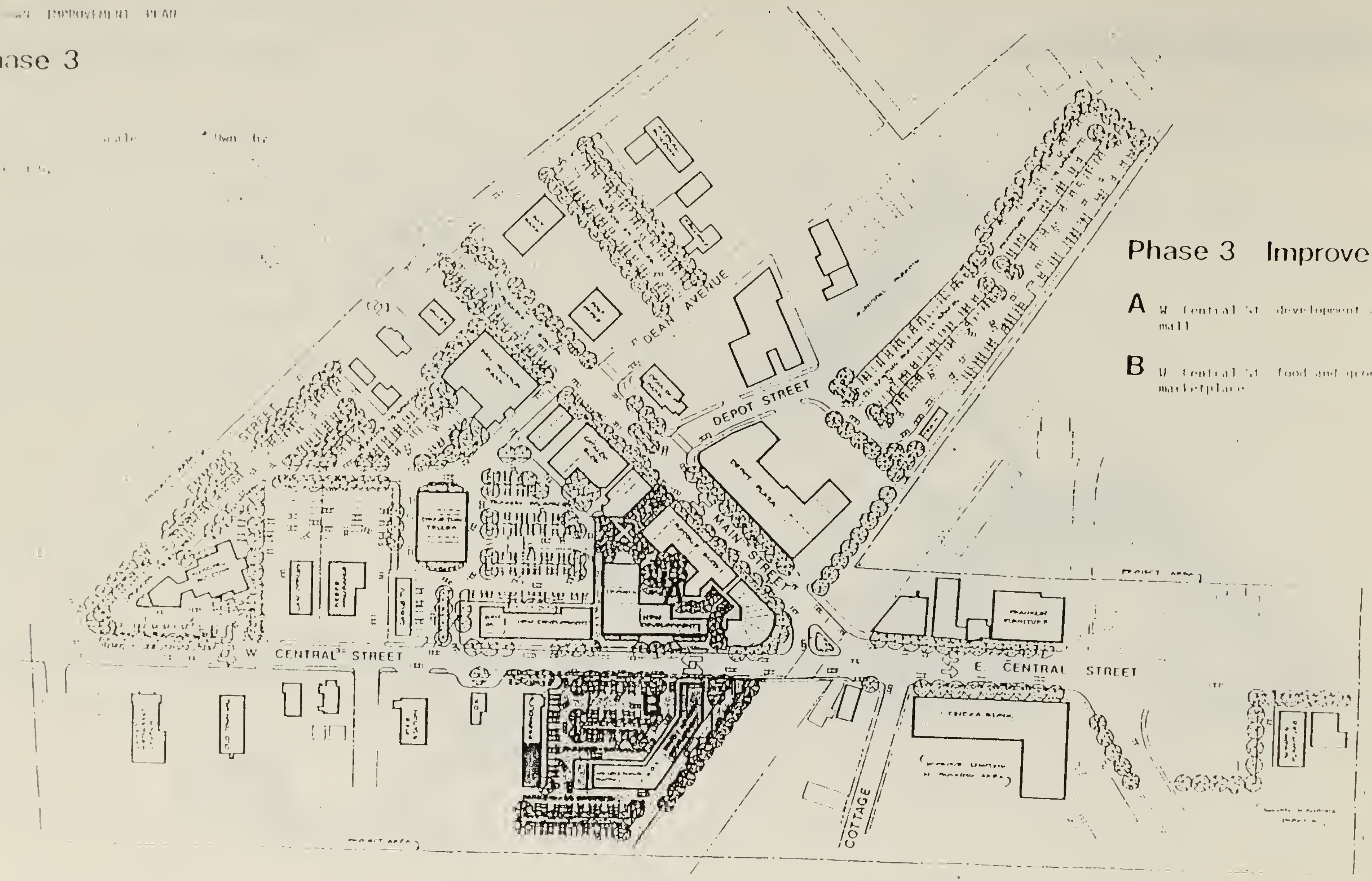
D Develop parking at Masonic Hall site for additional 55 spaces

E Upgrade parking and landscaping at the Town Hall site.

Franklin Center Revitilization

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Phase 3



Phase 3 Improvements

A W. Central St. development and pedestrian mall

B W. Central St. food and grocery expan... marketplace

zoning

ZONING ANALYSIS

In some instances proposed revitalization measures may require changes in a community's zoning bylaws in order to implement the recommended improvements. Proposed parking, new or expanded businesses, or strategies for improving the layout or design of a downtown may require amendments, variances, permits or new regulations. For this reason, MAPC has evaluated the proposed revitalization measures and downtown Franklin's current zoning classifications in order to identify those areas in which changes may be necessary.

For the most part, the proposed revitalization measures are consistent with the existing zoning in downtown Franklin (predominantly Commercial I). In order to improve the climate for revitalization however, MAPC recommends that some changes be made to the town's sign bylaw and general use schedule which will afford better control and improved conditions for future revitalization efforts.

Signs

In order to improve the overall design and character of the downtown, MAPC recommends that Franklin's sign bylaw be rewritten to include the following provisions:

- limit the number of permanent, accessory signs to one per establishment, not to exceed 10% of the wall area on which it is placed.

- limit the allowable coverage of window signs to 30% of the total window area on which they are placed.

- prohibit the use of roof signs.

- prohibit perpendicular signs which project into, on or over a public sidewalk, street or way.

- establish a deadline for non-conforming signs, such that all signs must conform to the provisions of the bylaw within 3 years.

Use Schedule

The following changes are recommended for the schedule of uses allowed in the Commercial I district. In most cases MAPC simply recommends that particular uses require a special permit instead of their current use-by-right status. In the case of produce stands, the current restrictions prohibit the establishment of any seasonal farmers' markets or similar produce sales which could be beneficial to the downtown.

The suggested changes are:

Section III - B.1	Currently allowed uses should be made subject to a special permit contingent on site plan review. Restriction on produce stands should be eliminated to allow sales from off-site sources.
Section III - B.2	Bank drive-in facilities (2.3), section 2.6 (motor vehicles, etc. sales), 2.7 (motor vehicle etc. service) and 2.9 (parking facility) should require a special permit contingent on site plan reviewed. Section 2.12 (other retail sales, service) should elaborate on included uses.
Section III - B.3	Bus, railroad stations (3.1) should require a special permit contingent on site plan review.
Section III - B.4	Other dormitories or educational uses (4.6) should require a special permit contingent on site plan review.
Section III - B.5	Indoor commercial amusement etc., should require a special permit contingent on site plan review.

Zoning Conflicts

Current recommendations call for expanded parking areas at the railroad station, on the site of the Masonic Hall, and on Emmons Street near the Municipal Building. Each of these locations falls on or near the border between commercial and residential districts. It is possible that small parcels may require re-zoning in order to accommodate parking lots. Similarly, it may be useful to rezone the Municipal Building site to C-1 to eliminate ambiguity in its use in the downtown. The bylaw and zoning map used for this analysis are not sufficiently detailed to provide definitive answers as to which locations and how much land may require re-zoning.